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**ZX SPECTRUM**

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION  
No. 45 OCTOBER 1987

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## HOT-PAK





# CRASH

## ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE 45 OCTOBER 1987

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COVER BY Oliver Frey

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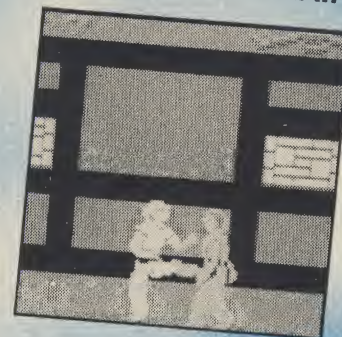
Get the *Mean Streak* mood and win a fab day out at Super Action from Mirrorsoft

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One cuddly Berk up for grabs in a preview comp!



RUN IT AGAIN



THE CRASH HISTORY

Aa-tenn-shon! Right, list'n up you disgustin' bunch of waifs and strays, the next CRASH will be on parade as from October 29 so I want you smart, tidy and ready for inspecshon! MOVE OUT!

Oh, and Mangram get your 'air cut you 'orrible little man and no lagging behind! Hut, hut, hut!



# DYNAMIC

# FREDDY HARDEST

## ARMY MOVES

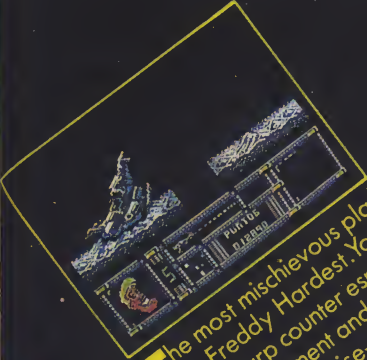


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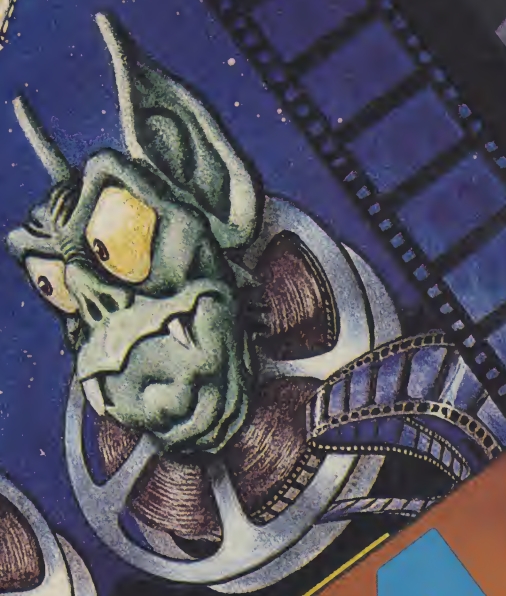






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BY PAUL WOAKES

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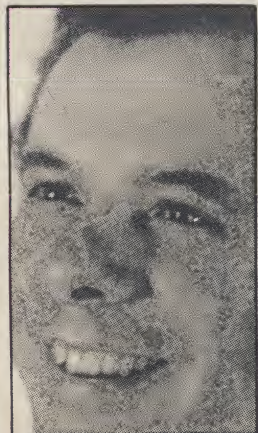
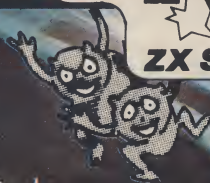
CONVERSION TO SPECTRUM 48K BY DR. DAVID AUBREY-JONES





# CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM



*Roger Mear*

## CRASH GOES UP

Straight from the shoulder then: sadly we are forced to make a price increase in CRASH starting next month with the November Issue, No 46, which will be £1.25. We know it seems quite a steep increase, but it should be seen in the light of the period of time over which we have held CRASH down at £1, almost two years in fact. The last increase was for the April 1986 issue. Since then there have been several severe rises in the price of paper which obeys an international market law of supply and demand – there's never enough to go round – plus the usual round of increases in printing services, salaries and overheads.

The increased use of full colour has also added to production costs, as has the greater number of specialist contributors who have allowed us to expand the areas covered by the magazine. So rather than put up the price by a smaller margin, and then have to make further rapid increases, we decided to make the rise sufficient to be able to hold the price for as long as possible – certainly for another 20 months.

In terms of comparable value, we doubt that many other computer titles will hold back with price increases for very long, for they too have suffered escalating production costs. Since CRASH started, it has usually been the first to put up its price when absolutely necessary and the others have always followed within a few months. We do hope you will find this increase acceptable.

## SHOULD SHOOT-'EM-UPS BE BANNED?

No. After the Hungerford killings everyone here and throughout the industry was suddenly well aware of the violence in computer games: phrases in reviews like 'it's great fun shooting everything in sight' took on a disturbing new meaning.

And soon after the incident 'an industry figure' wrote in *Computer Trade Weekly* that 'the commercial exploitation of unnecessary violence is a prevalent theme both on the part of the games and magazine publishers'.

We have reconsidered the good taste of what we say in CRASH, and no doubt many software houses will do the same with their games. But the real thrill of most shoot-'em-ups ISN'T the destruction, it's the satisfaction of skill and coordination in a fast-moving game which might as well be hockey. After all, no-one takes 'killing' aliens in 'spacecraft' seriously...

This is a subject to which we'll be returning as demands increase for censorship, or at least certification, of games.

## GNUDISM

A slight reshuffle at the Towers (Mike Dunn was demanding a bigger desk and having to rent space off Nick Roberts...) has meant new titles for a couple of oldies: Roger 'What? Me move ►



from mag to mag?' Kean and Barnaby Page. We're both still on CRASH – Roger is Editorial Director and Barnaby is Managing Editor.

All that means is that day-to-day hassling – by software houses, readers, potential writers, whoever – should be directed to Barnaby and not Roger. (Pause for Roger to breathe sigh of relief.)

Speaking of potential writers, we are looking for a new copy editor – someone who goes through everyone else's writing and corrects spelling, grammatical mistakes and, prepares it to for typesetting. It's not really a game-playing job, but if you're *really* hot on English, probably with A level at least, and you'd like to get into the production side of magazines, contact the Man Ed at CRASH.

## ONE OF OUR SUBS OFFERS IS MISSING

It's not often minions make it onto the editorial pages, but a

spokesman for Guru Denise has asked us to point out that a few of the US Gold games in the Issue 44 subscription offer have been delayed in programming. Sit tight and they'll arrive!

Also, for technical reasons *Tai-Pan* and *Renegade* may be delayed if you've sent off for them through mail order.

## TWO I, BALLS

*I, Ball 2* was originally planned as a preview for this issue and only became a review very close to press date. By that time, da boys in design had already – irrevocably – allocated it a place on the preview pages, and the page with the picture on it had left Ludlow. That's why there's a photo but no preview!

In other words, it was an error for technical reasons. (That's enough technical reasons – Ed Dir) (Who's running this announcement anyway? – Man Ed)

ROGER KEAN  
BARNABY PAGE

# IN NEXT MONTH'S CRASH INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION!

Yes, it's true! We're always going on about 3-D graphics, isometric perspectives *et al*, but in next month's issue, Oli Frey goes three-dee with a vengeance. CRASH is giving every reader a free pair of spectacles with a green lens and a red lens – they'll be tucked inside the issue – through which some of Oliver's illustrations may be seen leaping off the page. Even now, his artwork is being lovingly pulled to pieces, readjusted into depth planes and reconstructed to look real weird. Don't miss out on this truly awesome experience! To be there is to be 3-D!

## FX and GRAFFIX

Indeed we are, always going on about 3-D graphics, isometric perspectives, nice little tunes and raunchy explosions *et al*. The film industry started off in back gardens, the software industry in back bedrooms (never the front); films grew in sophistication until today experts are needed in special FX experts, sound and music. Games software production has also grown to the point where programmers are no longer expected to do all the work. Next month we take an in-depth look at the software specialists – the new generation of professionals.

## PLUS...

**FANZINE FILE** – more from the sharp edge of private publishing  
**CRASH CHALLENGE** – another victim, but will the hapless person be a reader or a reviewer?

**ON TAPE AND DISK** – a faulty load, a damaged cassette, we take our bits a plastic for granted, but just how do they get the binary onto tape or disk in massive quantities? CRASH takes a trip round a duplicator.

And that's just some of the exciting items in November's CRASH, on sale Thursday 29 October.

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The CRASH guide to October's offerings

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# How to be a **COMPLETE**



## Game

Ade is the sort of person who loosens the screws from the handles of disabled persons' toilets or markets Space Shuttle Jigsaw Puzzles.

In the game he has successfully gate-crashed a yuppie party on the posh side of town and to succeed as **The Complete Bastard** he must incapacitate all the guests by the end of the party and light up each letter in the phrase **COMPLETE-BASTARD**. He must also build up as many **Bastard Points** as he can by extremely offensive behaviour.

Now you can play Ade and be a **Complete** and **Utter Bastard** in this arcade adventure with split-level screen that's crammed full of absolutely **tasteless humour**.

**'Anything this horrible is bound to sell millions.'** Sinclair User.

Based on the book of the same name © 1986 by Adrian Edmonson, Mark Leigh, Mike Lepine. A Virgin Book.



Amstrad screen.



Spectrum screen.



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# KERRASH!

# N·E·W·S

If you're reading this at The PCW Show, remember that bigger isn't always better and there's plenty to play with at the Microfairs, OK?

## COKE ADDS LIFE

**LONDON, 0610 hrs** – a Rapide coach pulls into Victoria station, and a bleary-eyed Scouse alights holding a half-full Coke can (his sixth that night). With a few others he walks off into the teeming rain.

**0635 hrs** – a look up the road reveals that the New Horticultural Hall is closed to the public. One of the elders finds a cafe for more coffee and coke, trying to keep awake.

The crowds were gathering for the 24th ZX Microfair that early, and by 9.30 companies had started handing out leaflets outside the hall and *The Bug* was being forced on everyone – but finally the doors opened.

It took about five seconds for the hall to fill up.

The ZX Microfair is still going strong. Romantic Robot showed off its Multiprint and its new Multiface 3 for

+3-owners (which Simon N Goodwin introduces on page 120). Sixword had the Swift Disc interface – serious competition for the Disciple, perhaps, though that Rockfort product seemed to dominate the entire upper floor.

Logic Sales, which had bought Rotronics's £130 Wafadrives for a fiver each when the company crashed, managed to sell more than 180 at the fair – for £15 each! (The Wafadrive uses little square wafers that contain loose tape in 16K, 32K or 48K sizes; it has a dual drive and RS232/Centronics interfaces.)

On the comms side, Micronet had a stand and sold VTXs and subscriptions in large quantities; Spectre Comms sold a new ROM for the VTX which makes it do wonderful things. The entire stock went!

Fanzines made a surprisingly prominent appearance, and a new one, *Spectrum Smashes*, was launched at the fair.

And the QL was there in force showing that old computers die hard. Mind you, new computers start early these days – there was a Z88-users group already set up at the Microfair.

The rest of the fair was taken up by mail-order companies selling games for £2-£5 each as well as hardware and disks; someone got *The Great Space Race* for 25p. (He was ripped off.)

So the ZX Microfair is far from dead; it was a good day out, and it's certainly a cheap way of topping up your games collection.

1800 hrs – boards coach, reclines seat, orders 32nd coke...

PAUL EVANS

## YOUR POPULAR SINCLAIR UPDATE?

**FOCUS MAGAZINES**, publisher of *Your Computer* and *Sinclair QL World*, has purchased *Popular Computing Weekly* and *ST Update* from Sunshine Publications – and hopes to make the declining weekly work again.

Says Richard Hease, Managing Director of Focus: 'The two new titles fit in nicely with the other publications that we are producing. I've always wanted to have a go at running a weekly and now I've got the opportunity.'

Hease is not expecting to have to make any changes to *Popular Computing Weekly*, which was relaunched only a few months ago after losing sales. 'I am happy with the way the magazine looks,' he said.

Ironically, it's a sort of homecoming for Brendon Gore, presently Managing

Editor at Focus – he helped to set up Sunshine when it was founded in 1981 and is a former editor of *Popular Computing Weekly*.

TONY THOMPSON

## DOMARK'S BID FOR SWINDLE CASH

**THERE WAS** no looking over the shoulder when daring Domark announced this autumn's most licentious licence – a game based on top Tory Jeffrey Archer's best-selling novel *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less*!!!

Saucy software boss Mark Strachan says it's 'completely brilliant' – but we wonder whether he's thinking about the deal or the tall, handsome politician's story, which tells how four swindled men get their revenge!!!

Tie-ins – don't you just love 'em????!!!!

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NEW RELEASE

## AMSTRAD CUTS +3 PRICE



► Will it sell at a new low price?

**THE SPECTRUM +3** will be reduced to £199 from September 23 – the day The PCWShow kicks off the new season.

*Computer Trade Weekly* reported the cut from £249 just as CRASH went to press, confirming long-running industry speculation that Amstrad would not be able to sell the machine at that high price. (Amstrad's move this

month was predicted by CRASH in an Issue 43 analysis.)

The trade paper also said that Amstrad is planning a major TV ad boost for the + – and further support for the machine with its built-in disk drive should come from Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 (see page 120), with which some cassette software can be transferred onto disk.



# Fear & Loathing



## THE GREEKS HAD A WORD FOR IT

Well, two: computer journalism. Hunter S sets off for Crete (en route to Olympia), spends long hours chasing the elusive exclusive and finally gets snapped up by a piranha which turns out to be a bear . . .

**ONLY THE ENGLISH** weather can turn in just one week from being so hot your skin goes red and peels at the slightest exposure to this shivering, grey autumn! It's at times like this your mind turns to thoughts of somewhere hot – tropical even. And no, I don't mean *The PCW Show*! We'll come to that later.

Nor am I talking about Bangkok, which is where I should be at this very moment in the company of a pack of jet-lagged journos out on the spree – courtesy of System 3, which was looking for the only place in the world not to have heard of Andy Wright to launch its Thai-boxing simulation *Bangkok Knights*.

Actually I was down for this last jaunt till I pulled out, if not quite at the eleventh hour certainly some time after *News At Ten*, and I'm sure you'll look upon it as a gross dereliction of duty when I tell you the reason. I tried all I could to provide a substitute but my erstwhile compatriot, Leslie B, is still missing in action, held by a fanatical sect of Dragon 32-owners somewhere on the Cardiff/Beirut border.

So instead I'm off to Crete, home of the Minotaur and a lot more old bull besides, taking a rather belated honeymoon. After all, it's a full four weeks since the wedding and I reckon Madde deserves some sort of reward for putting up with me so long. For the next fortnight the last thing I'll be thinking of is software – because it seems that for the last four weeks software is all I've thought of!

We got married on the Friday – and I can heartily recommend this age-old institution to anyone considering it – and spent the weekend relaxing. Then on Monday morning seven kinds of demons broke loose, the phone started ringing at 9.30 and it didn't stop all day. Since then life has been unbelievably frantic, hectic and all-round wall-crawlingly crazy!

Which brings us to the topic I was trying to follow this month, before I somehow got waylaid. You see, I thought I might talk about what it's like being a freelance journalist. Try to get to the nut, as it were. Only I'm not sure that I can capture the sheer lunacy of spending two-and-a-half hours on trains to conduct a 90-minute interview which has to be sent to Ludlow by Red Star the next day!

Most of this panic is for *THE GAMES MACHINE*, which is going to be so up-to-the-minute that Graeme Kidd will still be printing copies with the Newsfield John Bull outfit on the stand at *The PCW Show*.

It's exhausting, chasing exclusive after exclusive, knowing that for every extra minute you spend taking a peek at a Christmas game you're going to be late for your next appointment . . .

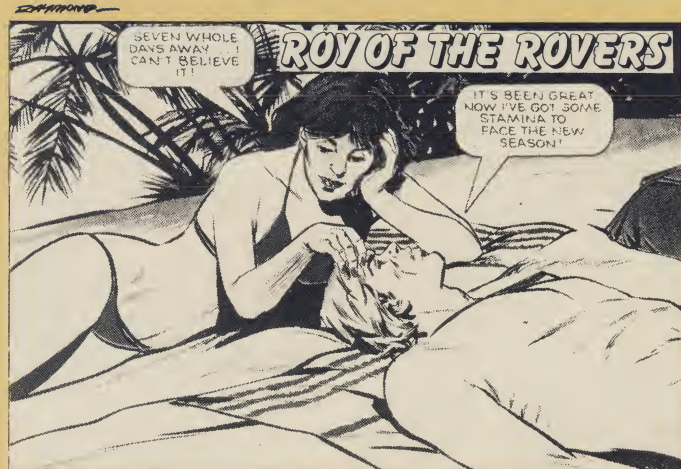
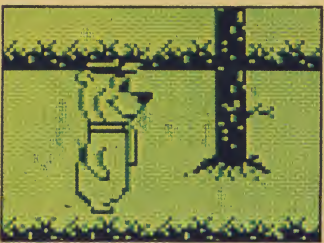
Which is why it was a drop of calming oil on the troubled waters when the phone rang and it was piranha-keeper Helen Holland, wondering if she could take me to lunch. For a moment I wondered what London Zoo's aquarium could want with me . . . maybe I'm the only thing in captivity more voracious than those evil small-finned gourmets!

Then I realised Helen is PR person for Piranha software. Too many months in this game and the circuits become somewhat fried . . . but the promise of a nice calm meal with no hard sell has a soothing effect. Also, Helen hails from Bolton, and we Northerners must stick together.

Piranha is about to move out of its present broom cupboard into something more spacious, and about time too. I've heard of concentrated activity, but the only way you could get more work going on in that room would be to pump out the air! Still, there was room for a monitor at least and Helen sat me down in front of it.

Okay, so the Piranha people have made a Boo Boo. They've also made a Yogi and some extremely irate picnickers. Yes, the game was an 'early version of *Yogi Bear* – sadly not the Spectrum one – and it looks rather addictive.

Boo Boo's been kidnapped so it's Big Bear to the rescue, leaping streams, dodging snakes and running from campers across 200-odd screens.



Certainly on the Commodore the graphics are everything you could wish for; let's hope they can capture those cartoon sprites on the Speccy.

The company's making quite a thing of cartoon and comic tie-ins. As well as Judge Death, they've signed up none other than the legendary Roy Of The Rovers – the golden boy who's never needed handball to win a match!

Helen told me about visiting Fleetway, the publishers of Roy's exploits. She was greeted by one of the big cheeses there, who proceeded to apologise for Roy's absence.

But away they go to lunch with Helen thinking no more about this cute little touch.

After their repast they return to the offices where big cheese comes to her with an apology: Roy nipped in and was sorry that he couldn't stay, but he signed a book for her. 'Oh aye,' thinks Helen, a woman who recognises a footballing wind-up when she meets one (she's obviously seen Bolton Wanderers play!). She notices a couple of pictures of Roy. 'Could he sign these for me too?' she asks, all innocently.

What follows goes to prove that the world of comics is even weirder than the world of computing. The big cheese shouts 'Hang on a minute, Roy', then scuttles out of the office to see if he can catch him. Catch him he does, returning with two signed photos for a totally befuddled Helen. After all, Roy is just a fictional character – isn't he?

Perhaps not (or is it just that

madness is catching?), because Helen hopes he'll be making a personal appearance at *The PCW Show*, along with a big, blue Berk – and she wasn't referring to me, but to the hero of *Through The Trapdoor*.

Helen's strangest mission for the show was a raid on M&S to buy two dozen pairs of Yogi Bear boxer shorts! What strange images of bizarre orgies went through the assistant's mind as she cashed them up? 24 men, stark naked apart from the shorts, with Helen in *Jellystone Ranger's* uniform spurring them on to greater pleasure with the promise of pickernick baskets? Is this the sort of work a nice Boltonian lass should be doing?

This is Helen's first *PCW Show*, and she's sensibly booked a holiday to follow. She'll need it. The only way to survive those five days of hell and horror at Olympia is to have the promise of a long rest afterwards. Either that or follow the Minson advice and stay in a state of temporary psychosis, developing into comatose babbling stupidity for the Sunday.

I know that by the end of the first day my feet will ache, my voice will be hoarse and my wrist will feel like it's been playing *Hyper-Sports* nonstop from so much pumping of the flesh. But would I miss it? Not on your life. Pain, agony, craziness – yes, that sort of sums up freelance journalism. And I guess that's why I love it!

Yours in suntan oil and ouzo

HUNTER S MINSON





# PIRANHA

## YOGI BEAR

Hey Hey Hey!  
Are you smarter than  
the average bear? You'll  
need to be to get out of this  
one. Boo-Boo's been bear-napped  
and must be rescued before  
hibernation time. Hunters, mooses,  
vultures, bees, caverns, geysers as well  
as good old Ranger Smith are  
determined to stop you!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

## TRAP THROUGH THE DOOR

Berk is back!  
Now you can actually  
explore the dark and nasty  
regions for yourself as you try  
to rescue your friend Boni,  
trapped in the murky depths.  
Along the way all sorts of creepy  
critters will try to spook you in exciting  
arcade action!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassette £8.95 Discs £14.95

## FLUNKY

The Royal  
Family as they have  
never been seen before!  
This is your chance to work at  
Buck House — as a menial  
manservant. Your job is to cater to  
the residents' every whim, but you'll  
need cunning, strong nerves and quick  
reactions if you are going to avoid a  
nasty end.

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95  
Coming soon for  
the Atari ST.





# ATTACK!



## ROY OF THE ROVERS

Melchester Rovers is under threat of closure from greedy property developers. On the eve of a special celebrity match organised to save the club, Roy's team mysteriously disappears. Unless he rescues them he may end up facing the opposition alone!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

## JUDGE DEATH

Megacity is being terrorised by the Dark Judges — Death himself and his cronies Fear, Fire and Mortis. They are dedicated to putting an end to life itself. As Judge Anderson you stand alone. Only your psychic powers and blazing gun can save Megacity!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

## GUNBOAT

Powerful, manoeuvrable and deadly, the Gunboat under your command carries the most lethal waterborn weaponry to date. Deep in the complex maze of fjords and canal systems are your targets — huge submarine pens. Your mission — to seek and destroy!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad  
Cassettes £8.95 Discs £13.95

For release schedules, please contact Helen Holland at the address below. Piranha games are available from all good stockists or, in case of difficulty, direct from Helen Holland, Piranha, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3FL. Tel: 01-836 6633.





# New York's Scum Are About To Take Over



Strap on your famous 475 WILDEY MAGNUM, turn yourself into a one man fighting force armed with pump action shotgun, machine gun and rocket launcher. Now turn the tables on the punks and creeps who certainly know how to dish out the violence but may not be so good at being on the receiving end.

**SPECTRUM 48/128K**

Cassette £7.99

**MSX** Cassette £7.99

**CBM 64/128 & AMSTRAD**

Cassette £9.99 Disk £14.99



## DEATH WISH 3 .....

The big screen classic, in which modern day vigilante Paul Kersey wreaks his own form of revenge on the scum and filth that terrorise the streets of modern day New York. For too long the gangs have run wild, unchallenged in their perverted attacks and violations of innocent citizens. Muggings and robberies have become a daily feature of city life. So when the chief of police turns a blind eye you decide to take over where the law left off.



# It's Down To You To Stop Them... You Are Bronson

Gremlin Graphics Software Limited, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

**GREMLIN**

© 1986 Cannon Productions NY



## MOTOS



Producer: **M.A.D.**  
Retail price: **£2.99**  
Authors: **Binary Design**

**A**fter a hard day flying a spacecraft, the last thing you want to do is fend off a succession of jostling alien jerks. But that's what you've got to do in *Motos* if you're not to be sent toppling from a series of grids in space. Stray too close to the platform edge, and any unfriendly nudge you receive can end one of your five lives.

So you'd better do it to them before they do it to you. Using your multidirectional capabilities you can help your attackers over the edge with a deft push or two. And you earn points for each globular geek, boisterous bee or overfed orb that you pack off.

You can also increase your score by carefully nuzzling points beacons toward the edge of the void – and protect yourself by collecting features such as strength and jumping power.

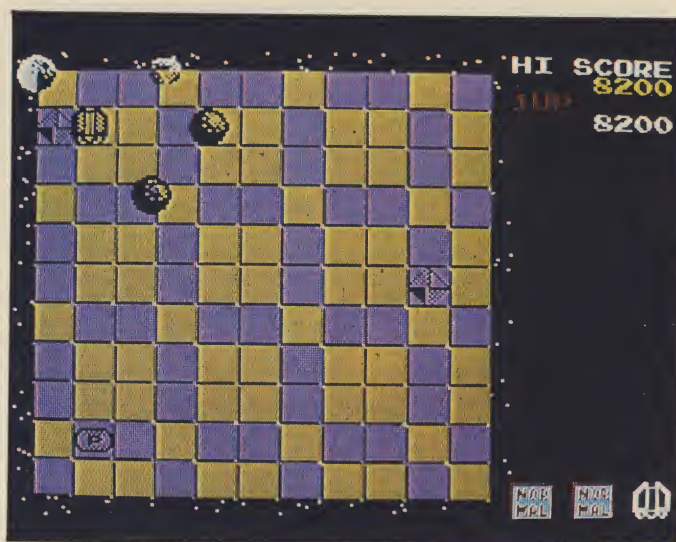
The jump feature can be used to leap to platform islands separate from the main grid. Think before you leap, though; the weight of your landing cracks the delicate

### NICK

"What a colourful and well-presented game *Motos* is! The mono/colour choice is useful, and the 128 tunes enhance the game even more. Some of the aliens on higher levels are fantastic, though difficult to destroy. The only thing wrong with *Motos* is the way it slows down when more aliens arrive on the screen. *Motos* should appeal to anyone with a sense of pure fun."

86%

► M.A.D. but true: the weird *Motos*, licensed from a Namco arcade game



► Push a few aliens into the deep ravine of space – but don't forget to collect the power pill!

### MIKE

"*Motos* is really fun, the sort of game that needs absolutely no instructions or story line to make it really enjoyable. The colour is excellent, the sound pleasing; if only all budget games were this good..."

79%

component squares of the grid, and if you hit them again they'll disintegrate, leaving you to an unpleasant, deadly fate in space.

A feature can't be used on the screen where it's collected – it has to be saved for later screens. And of course features also use up energy...

The grids across which you

### BEN

"Why on earth should Mastertronic want to license such an obscure coin-op? Still, *Motos* isn't bad – it's well-presented, and there are lots of colourful screens and pleasant 128K tunes. But many of the later levels are too easy, and a game without challenge is about as much good as an ice-cream stand in the Arctic. *Motos* is instantly playable, but equally forgettable."

58%

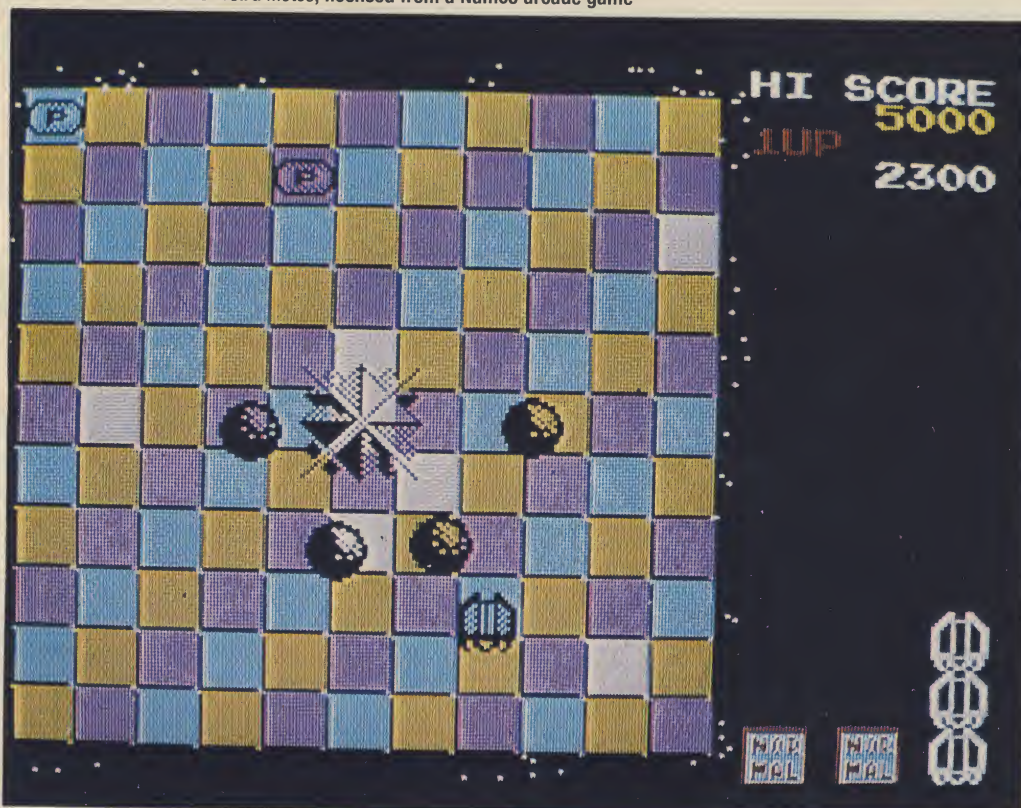
skitter are eventually attacked by rains of shooting stars and riddled with holes. You can push the pestering extraterrestrials into the gaping chasms – but remember you can go the same way.

*Motos* is a conversion from the Namco arcade game.

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Kempston, Sinclair  
**Graphics:** simple but well-defined  
**Sound:** reasonable FX, 128 tune  
**Options:** choice of mono or colour display  
**General rating:** *Motos* is a strange licence – but it's addictive and fun

<b>Presentation</b>	79%
<b>Graphics</b>	75%
<b>Playability</b>	80%
<b>Addictive qualities</b>	78%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>74%</b>





## HYSTERIA

Producer: Software Projects  
Retail price: £7.95  
Authors: Special FX

**S**omewhere in the mists of time and space, someone is changing our future by altering our past. An extinct primeval entity is being summoned through the barriers of time by a fanatical sect whose aim is to disrupt the future balance of power.

You are the sole survivor of a once-elite time corps, and you have been summoned to destroy this evil threat. The battle takes place in a once-thriving small town in the middle of nowhere – where there's a big problem. The locals

### NICK

"Hysteria is the right name for this game, it's so frustrating when you get savagely killed. The game layout is very similar to Ghosts 'n' Goblins and the colour scrolling works quite well despite occasional clash. The gradually disappearing bust which shows your remaining strength is a neat idea, like the icons. Hysteria is a superb game with plenty of depth."

76%

### RICKY

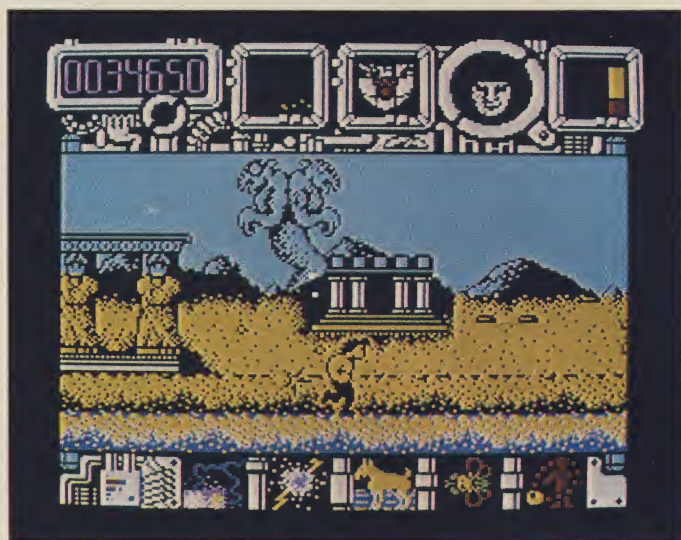
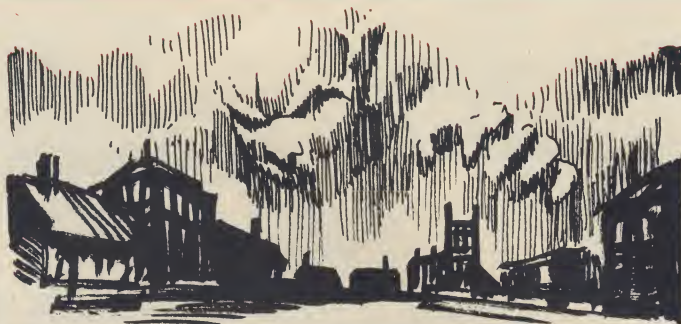
"Graphically superb and well-animated, with some beautifully detailed characters, Hysteria is an addictive and playable game. The screen display seems well thought-out: there's never any confusion, whether you want to know your energy level, how many more pieces to collect, or whatever. Though Hysteria doesn't offer a long-term challenge, it'll certainly provide a lot of frantic fun for a while."

80%

aren't all that keen on time warriors and time lords, and they tend to get a mite upset at the sight of the multicoloured scarf and the police box.

But your mission is essential, and among your heavy armour and weapons you have a revolutionary energy-conversion kit that will turn harmless mortal objects such as lemons and worms into ultrapowerful weapons. (Some of the weapons don't last very long, though.)

The evil conspirators can be unveiled by destroying hostile busts – different ones on every level – which sometimes fire at

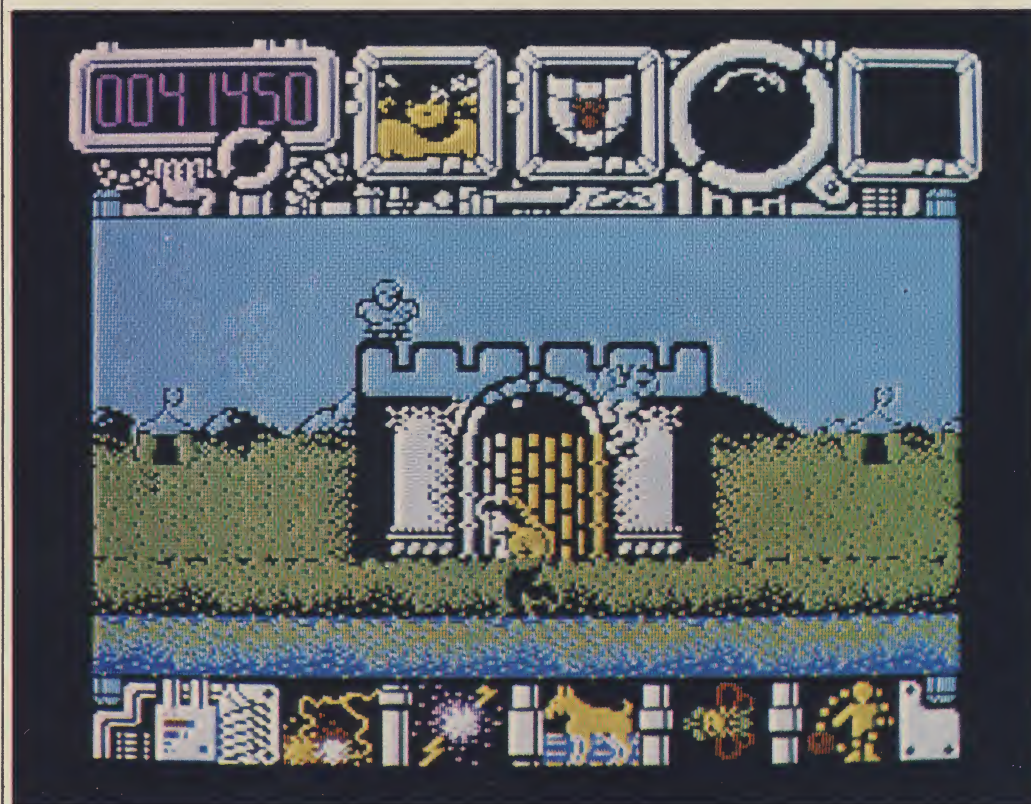


► Words fail us as another huge end-of-level monster approaches...

you. Destroying a bust earns you a piece of a special jigsaw puzzle; collect six pieces of the jigsaw and an evil being becomes visible. This

terrible entity is then forced to attack you – and this is your chance to weaken the monstrosity and repel it before moving on to another era and another enemy.

► From the strange primeval mists of time and space comes a horrifying threat – sounds like Cam on a Monday morning



### BEN

"At first I was well put off by Hysteria's resemblance to Cobra. Basically it's like the Ocean game tarted up with a few extra features; the graphical style, the sound and the feel are all unoriginal. But the gameplay has been changed, if not for the better, and Hysteria is good fun – and probably will be till I complete it."

78%

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair  
**Graphics:** well-defined and colourful  
**Sound:** a couple of tunes and perfunctory FX  
**Options:** definable keys  
**General rating:** a good Cobraesque game

<b>Presentation</b>	82%
<b>Graphics</b>	81%
<b>Playability</b>	77%
<b>Addictive qualities</b>	67%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>78%</b>



# MOONSTRIKE

Producer: **Mirrorsoft**  
Retail price: **£7.95**  
Authors: **Binary Innovations**

**Y**ou're out for revenge after Sir Humphrey Bogus, inventor of the digital tea bag, said something rather unpleasant about your grandmother. Seated in a multidirectional space craft, you begin your cruise of death over a vertically scrolling lunar surface.

This moon world is encrusted with craters and enemy bases from which come a stream of invulnerable blast molecules. These circular particles compete with numerous other destructive features such as light bulbs, bombs with rotating tails, and

## NICK

"The graphics are fantastic, getting better as you progress from level to level, and the animation of some of the nasties is well done and very smooth. The general idea is very similar to Lightforce games; the main object is to destroy everything. The only thing wrong with Moonstrike is that your ship moves too slowly and so avoiding bombs becomes very frustrating. But it's an ace game."

90%

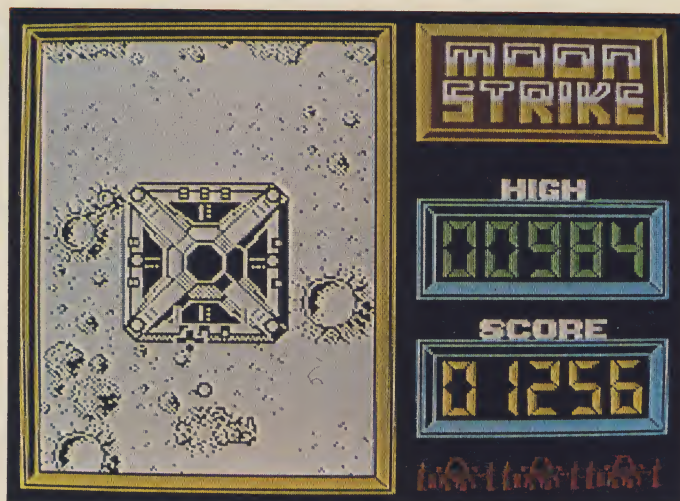
spinning boulders to blast your fragile space vehicle into insignificance, doing more

## BEN

"When smooth, well-presented, vertically scrolling shoot-'em-ups such as Lightforce first appeared on the Speccy I was interested. But now, after a year, I'm sick of them because there's been no great improvement in quality or gameplay. Originality (or unoriginality) aside, Moonstrike is boring; it's a little too difficult so there's rarely any sense of achievement, and it plays far too slowly to be appealing. But the graphics, the game's redeeming feature, are excellent: the characters are large and beautifully animated and the attention to detail on the landscape is amazing. There are a few nice touches – look out for the Mona Lisa! If you haven't got a game of this type on the shelf already Moonstrike is reasonable, but others are just that bit more playable..."

67%

► Clear granny's name and launch into Moonstrike



► More digital tea-bag trickery

damage than Arthur Daley could ever repair.

Approaching hazards must be avoided, or destroyed; and lunar bases can be taken out by accurate fire from your blazing blasters before they send too many obnoxious weapons in your direction.

Wipe out these perils and you earn points – but if they pierce your craft's vulnerable protective skin, you lose one of your three lives.

Watch out for the Mona Lisa on the third level (though even she can have her enigmatic smirk removed by a sudden decapitation) and deal some irrevocable blows to the smug-looking smilies (y'know, those horrible happy badges that ageing hippies wear).

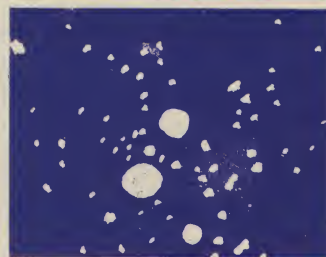
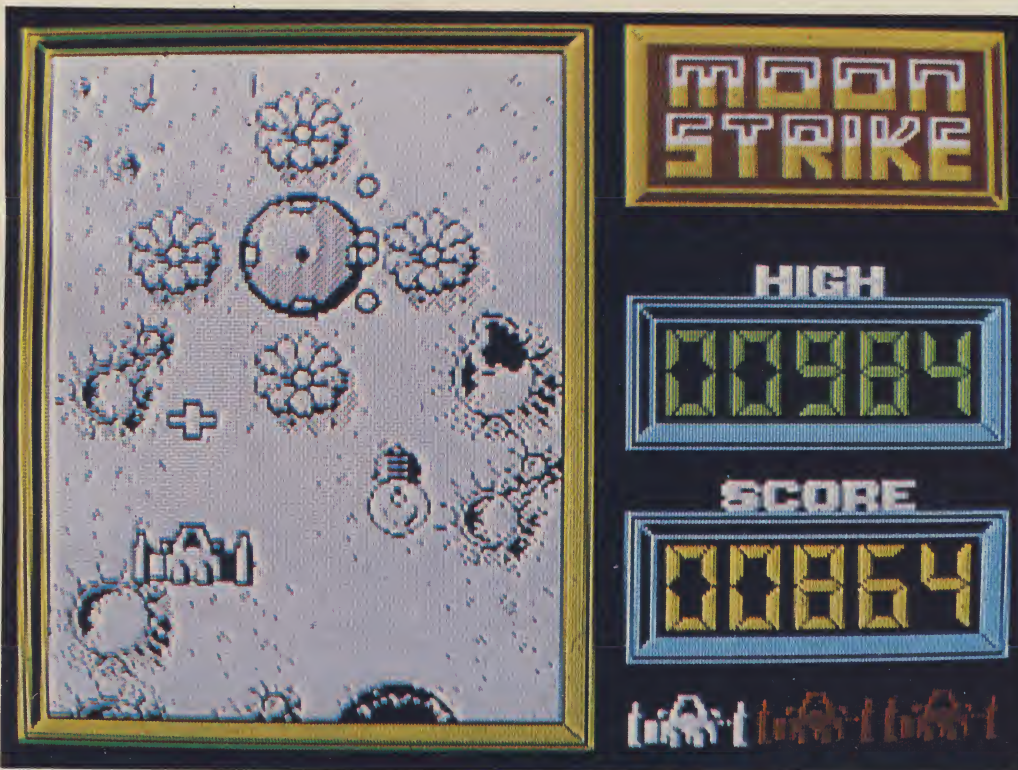
Moonstrike is the first game to use Movieload, a system

developed by Mirrorsoft which displays changing text and pictures while the main program is loading.

## RICKY

"The Movieload of Moonstrike uses humour reminiscent of The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy, but it's just as well there's a normal loader too; the new technique takes time and after you've seen it once or twice the hilarity begins to wear off. The game itself is a competent variation on the traditional shoot-'em-up, and the peculiar aliens such as bomb-spitting flowers and killer light bulbs brighten up what could otherwise have been tedious."

73%



## COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

**Graphics:** monochromatic – but beautifully detailed, and large

**Sound:** good tune and typical blasting FX

**General rating:** a super shoot-'em-up with a humorous edge

Presentation	86%
Graphics	86%
Playability	72%
Addictive qualities	68%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>77%</b>



## HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Producer: **Virgin Games**  
Retail price: **£7.95**  
Authors: **Sentient Software**

**A**re YOU a complete bastard? You can try your worst in this adaptation of Adrian Edmondson's Virgin book. With all the decorum of a herd of psychopathic wildebeest, you manage to gate-crash a frightfully yuppie party and proceed to wreak havoc.

A split screen shows two views of every room you enter; either can be rotated to show a further aspect.

This offers you the great opportunity of thoroughly searching other people's furniture. Behind the closed doors of cupboards, units and wardrobes lurk everyday items that in the right hands – your hands – can cause aggravation, irritation and mutilation to any unfortunate in the

### BEN

"Coming from the people who did Tai-Pan, one of the most serious games this year, this is a shock – and it should have been much more appealing. There are a few nice features, like Bastavision, but though they're neat they don't add much to the gameplay. How To Be A Complete Bastard is along the lines of Jack The Nipper, with lots of added nausea and bad taste – it's fun to play for a bit, but I doubt you'll come back to it."

65%

vicinity. Any two objects can be carried at once and examined at will, but how you can use them depends on how drunk you are.

Your body is one great factory of noxious gases, fuelled by what you eat and measured by a Fartometer; these fumes, delivered with all the grace you can muster, clear rooms of guests – fast. (Take care near naked flames, though.) You are also linked to a Smellometer registering a general level of BO which, for a true bastard, should be high.

Drink is readily available: extra-strong lager intoxicates you quickly, as shown on the Drunkometer, but if you drink too much the display begins to spin wildly.

Check your water levels on the Weeometer and go-go go while you can. Leave things too long and an unthoughtful Nigel or Samantha might have occupied

### NICK

"Adrian Edmondson's book is brilliant, and so is this game. The graphics are well-defined and the colour is good, though limited. The way you can rotate both the top and the bottom screens is very confusing, but essential."

87%

the loo. But you could go elsewhere, couldn't you?

Limitless supplies of coffee can sober you up: so can medicine. Other liquids should be avoided if you want to stay alive!

The yuppie guests provide the ideal opportunity for you to engage in highly undesirable conversations. Push them hard against obstructions and they'll find it hard to resist your charms, offering information and providing the opportunity for a bit more mayhem.

Each of the unpleasant actions you commit earns you Bastard points, but other things are

### MIKE

"Such a lot of this depends on your opinion of Ade Edmondson's humour. If, like me, you quite enjoy it, then the game should appeal, but there's a lot in it that could easily offend. And if CRL's Dracula, not a particularly nasty game, carried a 15 certificate then surely this should be subject to certification too. Still, the graphics are quite good, the text is usually quite funny, and though the jokes stop being funny after 10,000,000 goes the game remains reasonably playable."

69%

► In glorious Tackovision, Cameron prepares to be complete



considered very girly, and must be avoided if you want to keep that total high. If your unpleasant activities force the yuppie guests into leaving, letters making up the phrase 'COMPLETE-BASTARD' light up. The game is finished when all of these letters are illuminated, by which time you'll have the place to yourself.

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

**Graphics:** good monochromatic playing area with decorative surrounds

**Sound:** girly opening tune, and spot FX

**General rating:** humorous and generally good, but perhaps not much lastability

Presentation	75%
Graphics	71%
Playability	72%
Addictive qualities	70%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>73%</b>



# FAST

QUICKSTVA



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THE TUBE?**

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ONE THAT WILL  
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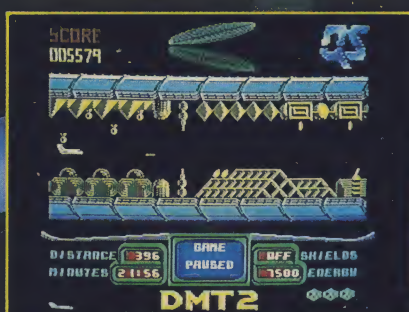
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CAPTURE AREA





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## ATHENA

Producer: Ocean  
Retail price: £7.95  
Author: Andrew Deakin

**V**oluptuous Athena, goddess of wisdom – *worra woman*. Tired with the everyday life of cleaning her heavenly home, our bikini beauty decides it's about time she got involved in a bit of the old heroic dealings. So off she sets to battle her way through six levels of forest, ice, land, sea, sky and hell.

Our heroine is no dumb blonde – this girl can jump, duck and run through these strange multilevel

### BEN

"Athena could have been very good – with rigorous playtesting. But as it stands the game is unplayable and unappealing. The graphics, small but neat and nicely animated, go a long way to redeeming it, though they do flicker occasionally. The sound is also well above average, with loads of good tunes and atmospheric effects crammed in. But you'll have to look elsewhere for a decent heroine..."

60%

### RICKY

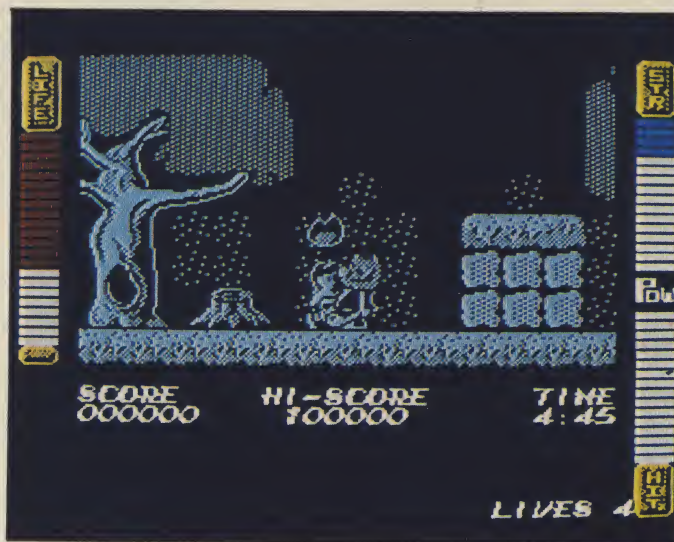
"Athena is definitely not for the arcade novice – it's an excruciating challenge to beat, through level after level of madcap violence. I needed all Athena's 15 lives to survive the first three levels! Graphically good and addictive, Athena is worthwhile for fans of the original and all hardened arcade players."

80%

### NICK

"Wow! Athena has all the qualities you expect of a good arcade adventure, though it's a bit too hard. The shading is excellent, and there are some really lovable characters – I liked the hooded ghost and the big-nosed ogre. This is simply an excellent game."

86%



► I'm no soppy girlie, I'm Athena and I'm about to shove a monster off this mortal coil...

that make up the landscapes. This reveals some useful objects for Athena's arsenal – and some deadly ones, so look out. Athena can also collect wings and fins to speed her on her dangerous way. But the beasts reduce Athena's

life force (you *knew* there was a catch), and she has only five lives. To restore her vitality, the curvaceous fighter can destroy roses, which release collectable hearts.

The goddess with gumption can leave each world by battling past a large and mighty sentinel, but wimps are advised to seek the other exit. And hurry – on each level a time countdown limits our heroine's scope for slothful perambulation.

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

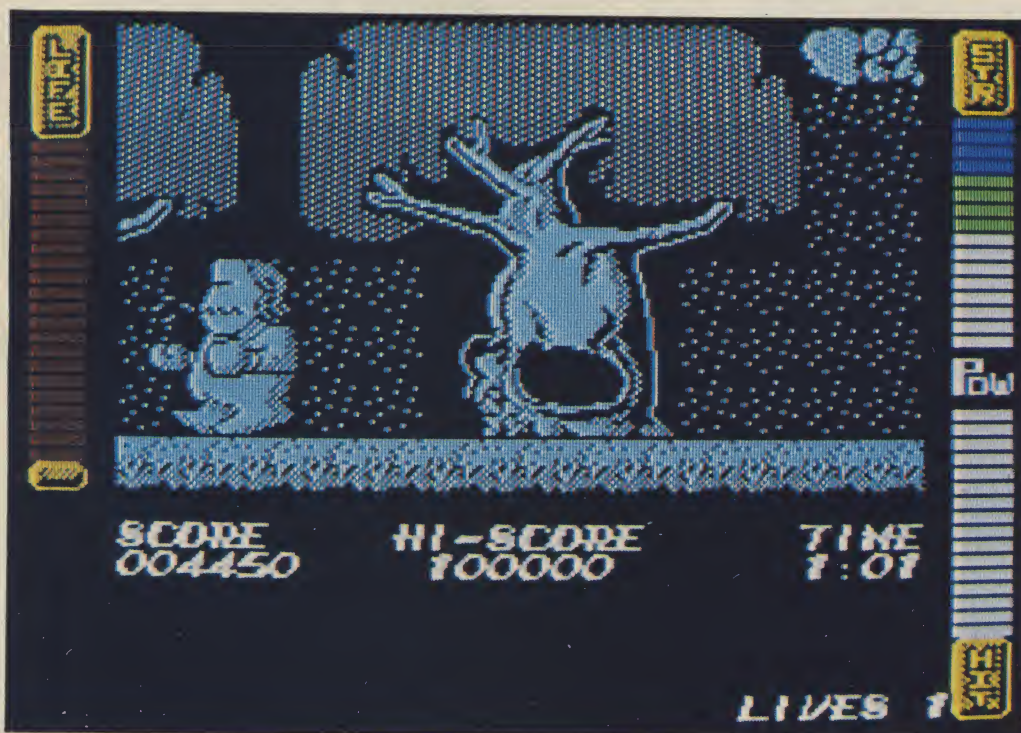
**Graphics:** small, neat, but monochromatic

**Sound:** lots of imaginative effects and tunes

**Options:** if you die on one of the first five levels, you can continue from the same point with a new set of five lives (the clock carries on, though) – up to 15 extra lives can be wangled this way

**General rating:** a challenging arcade conversion with plenty of depth

Presentation	85%
Graphics	80%
Playability	62%
Addictive qualities	61%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>75%</b>





# W·I·Z·B·A·L·L



If you were a wizened Wizard with a magical cat on a planet filled with colourful landscapes you'd be jolly fed up if someone tried to turn it into monochrome, wouldn't you? Of course you would. It's like suddenly being told your Amiga has attribute clash.

And that's exactly how Wiz feels when Zark and his unpleasant horde of helpers bleach his colourful Wizworld.

So, with a spherical Wizball space transporter to help him, Wiz begins to eliminate the invading colour-blind hordes. When the game begins, the transporter can spin to the left or right and bounce through the now drab Wizworld.

As Wiz progresses, he encounters lethal aliens: waves of crabs, diamonds and multiarmed spin-dles, all threatening poor Wiz's three lives. These creatures can be destroyed, for points, by the transporter. Many of them reveal green, smiling pearl faces when killed; by touching these faces Wiz collects extra capabilities, including supa-beams and blazers, protective sprays, smart bombs, shields, and a thruster and anti-grav powers to give him more control of the bouncing transporter.



Producer: Ocean  
Retail price: £7.95





But probably the most important thing for our crumbly warlock is Catebite, the magical feline.

Wizworld is composed of three colours: red, green and blue. To restore the brightness that Zark

"Wizball is one of the most playable games I've ever seen, despite some trivial bugs. The controls are perfect, though they're incredibly difficult to get to grips with (the instructions are less than clear, too)! The smooth-moving graphics are strikingly original, and the colour clash doesn't affect them too much. This is one hell of a game, so go geddit."

BEN

92%

and his mob have drained away. Wiz must burst floating colour bubbles. As droplets from them fall earthward, Catebite can gather them up.

As he does so, each droplet is placed in one of three empty cauldrons – one cauldron for each colour in the magic land. When a cauldron is full, one colour of Wizworld

"Wizball's graphics are fantastic and well-defined, and the higher levels reveal more and more delights – including wild assortments of aliens. And the bouncing Wizball looks like a cross between a Critter and Bobby Bearing! There are some decent spot FX, and a good 128 tune. Though the controls are difficult at first, it gets more playable and rewarding as you progress – an ace game."

NICK

90%

comes back to life; Wiz and Catebite can then concentrate on gathering the remaining colours.

Completing a colour also allows Wiz to visit his Wiz-Lab and gather yet more unbelievable powers.

"Wizball is a classic. The graphics are brilliant, despite some colour clash, and sound is excellent on the 128s (but a bit limited on the 48s). At first the bouncing is difficult to control – but once it's mastered and you've picked up a few of the right icons, Wizball becomes one of the best shoot-'em-ups I've played for ages. It's so polished it shines!"

MIKE

93%

When all three colours have been collected, Wizworld is restored to its old glory, and Wiz and his cat can go home to toast the defeat of Zark with the wizard's favourite drink – a well-earned glass of bat's bowel and hemlock fizz. Yum.

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair  
**Graphics:** weird, wonderful and well-defined despite some attribute clash  
**Sound:** some pleasant ditties  
**General rating:** a few control problems hardly detract from entertaining and playable game

**Presentation** 87%  
**Graphics** 88%  
**Playability** 93%  
**Addictive qualities** 92%  
**OVERALL** 92%

## Reviews

### GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

Producer: Code Masters

Retail price: £1.99

Authors: the Oliver Twins

Your stomach's full of butterflies but now it's too late, you're sitting in a Grand Prix racing car and the green start light is just about to flash. With the strident countdown still rumbling in your ears and the smell of scorched rubber and the tang of hot oil burning in your nostrils, you blast away from the start.

In this simulation, your car must be taken successfully around a series of 14 circuits, shown in bird's-eye view. As you carefully accelerate and decelerate around the track, negotiating bends and avoiding obstacles such as bridges, careful steering is essential – misjudge a corner and you could go spinning off the tarmac.

A clock shows each car's lap time, and after the race you're ranked as a 'fair' driver or a master.

When *Grand Prix Simulator* was released for the Amstrad CPC this spring, Activision alleged a breach of copyright: the Code Masters game was too similar to the coin-op *Super Sprint*, Activision said, pointing out that it owned the license to that arcade game.

### CRITICISM

● "Grand Prix Simulator is terrible. If you can actually find your car – not an easy task, especially on a badly-tuned TV, as it's only about four pixels long – then there's about ten minutes of interest here. There's certainly none of the addictiveness of a good racing game."

MIKE

38%

● "Ever wondered what it's like to race in a Grand Prix? If not,

this is the game for you because playing *Grand Prix Simulator* WON'T show you what it's like. The graphics are ultratrash, except for a bit of decent drawing on the borders; colour is badly-used because all the racetracks are mostly green and there's colour clash when you go near a barrier. Between games it sounds as if Donald Sinden has been bribed into doing some digitised speech. This won't be worth buying, even to the car-racing enthusiast."

NICK

46%

● "I'd listened to too much hype about *Grand Prix Simulator* – now I'm very disappointed. The game is fiddly to control and has little of the addictivity of good arcade racing games. The characters are small – because the 'car window' screen is. But the speech is OK, if not quite up to 1, Ball II standard! And I wouldn't be surprised to see this shoot to the top of the budget charts very soon – take your own risks..."

RICKY

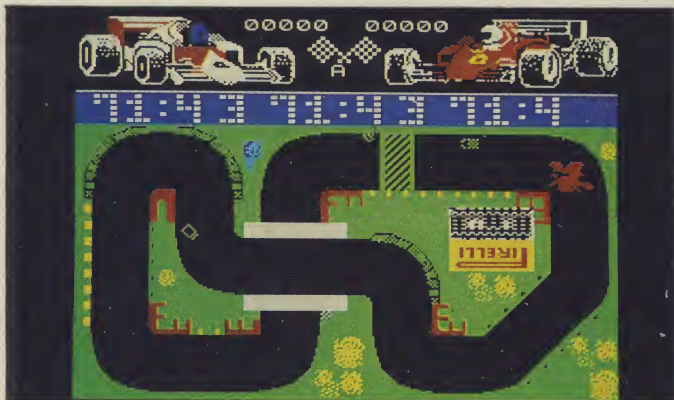
41%

### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair  
**Graphics:** colourful but small and poorly-animated  
**Sound:** good tune, but the car engine sounds like it's about to sieze up  
**Options:** two simultaneous players, definable keys  
**General rating:** a below-average race-driving simulation

**Presentation** 38%  
**Graphics** 25%  
**Playability** 40%  
**Addictive qualities** 41%  
**OVERALL** 42%

► Vrrrooooo! Racing round the Grand Prix track – watch out for blood on the road!





## PLEXAR

Producer: **M.A.D.**  
Retail price: **£2.99**  
Authors: **Paul Hargreaves**

**L**ong before a Reliant Robin had ever broken down on the M25, the Miracle Engineers had planned and built the crystal roads that led across the planet Plexar.

Now the Miracle Engineers are long dead and the primitive Plexarians have taken their place. Unlike their sophisticated predecessors, they are a superstitious race who send victims along the crystal roads to appease mysterious deities. Few return from this voyage – but as a chosen ‘volunteer’, can you survive it?

Your journey is made up of two stages: the crystal roads themselves, and the diamond

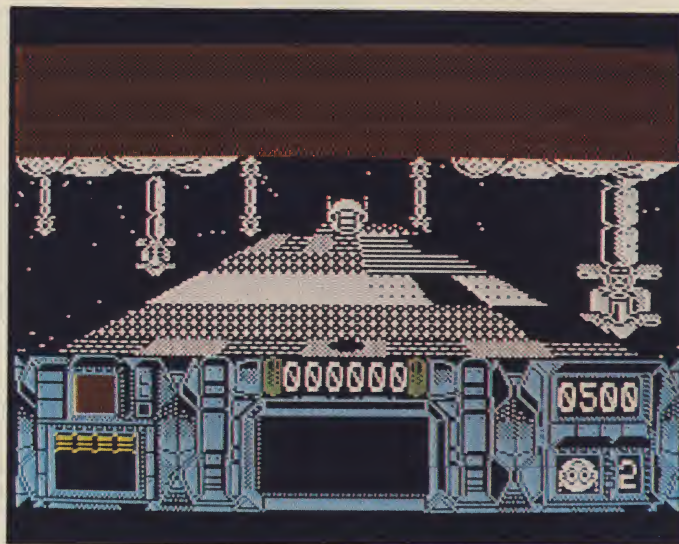
### MARK

“Wow, what pretty graphics,’ I thought as the intro screen zinged onto the monitor, ‘is the gameplay as good as the cosmetics?’ Yes, Plexar is very playable, and despite the obvious similarities to Trailblazer it kept me glued to the screen for a good while. Control is easy, and the gameplay is just frustrating enough to make you want to complete just one more level...”

82%

towers where the roads meet and interconnect, joining continent with continent.

Each road consists of a series of interconnected squares, some of which contain lethal things that can end your life on the spot. Others merely offer the unusual, useful or hindering, sending you on a helicopter ride, propelling you forward across dangerous squares, or making you skitter



► Blazing the trails in the third section of Plexar

randomly between squares.

If you’ve successfully navigated this roadway without too much mishap, you enter one of the diamond towers. These are weird places, full of complicated, vertically scrolling mazes of unidirectional conveyor belts, areas which simply vanish now and again, shivering colonies of pulsing jellies and obstructive walls.

And in the towers are found the patrolling servicebots that drain your energy at their every touch. To protect your meagre reserves, leap away from the approaching mechanical embraces.

A peril port at the top left of the screen changes colour and signifies when danger is imminent. Heed its warning well if you want a chance of survival – and never forget that against all this is the relentless countdown of the clock.

### RICKY

“Bearing some similarities – well, quite a lot, really – to Trailblazer, Plexar is playable but frustrating. And it goes beyond Trailblazer with some features to vary the predictability of your journey (transporters, for instance). Plexar can become quite tricky when the track is upside down, but it all adds to the excitement!”

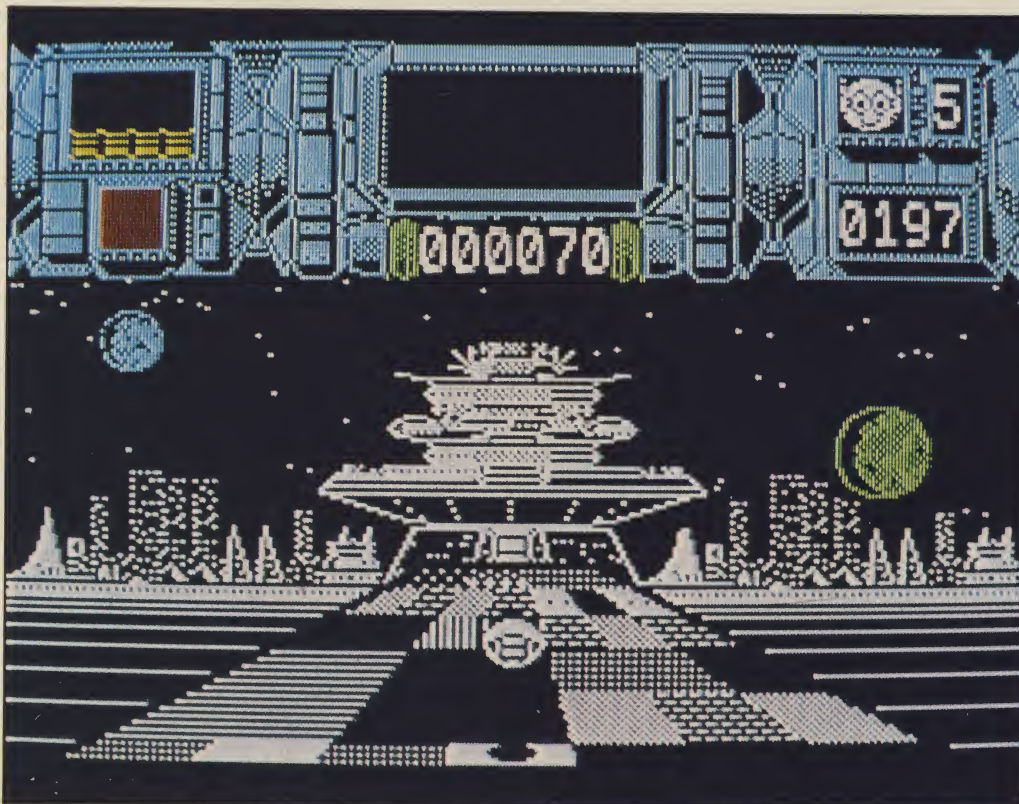
80%

### ROBIN

“On reading the instructions of Plexar I was expecting a run-of-the-mill maze variant. I couldn’t have been more wrong! The graphics are excellent, and though most of the moving characters are monochromatic the colourful backgrounds disguise this. Plexar is very simple and instantly playable, and it’s surprising such a simple game can be so addictive. One of my favourite features appears on the later levels, where a new dimension is added to the game – not only is there a tricky maze on the ground, but there’s also one above you which has to be navigated upside down! Yet again M.A.D. has come up with an outstanding game – get it as soon as you can.”

90%

► Flex those plexars and bounce off down the track



### COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair  
**Graphics:** excellent; mainly monochromatic, decorative surroundings in colour  
**Sound:** nothing inspiring  
**General rating:** a neat and enjoyable Trailblazer clone

Presentation	84%
Graphics	88%
Playability	86%
Addictive qualities	88%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>86%</b>



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## OCEAN CONQUEROR

Producer: **Rack-It**  
Retail price: **£2.99**  
Authors: **Lajos Palanki,**  
**Peter Vitray**

**D**oing the Captain Birdseye bit with a lot of hairy sailors while travelling beneath the ocean waves may not be everyone's idea of fun – but if you're a submariner then it's all in a wet day's work.

As Captain, Rear-Admiral, Vice-Admiral, or Admiral – the choice is yours – you're at periscope depth and intent upon destroying four convoys, each consisting of a freighter and two destroyers. These are supplying enemy troops based on islands in the region, and should the supplies get through, you've lost the war. Destroy your enemies and return to dock within 18 hours and you're the victor.

showing the level of water beneath the keel, the directional bearing of the craft, its rudder angle, speed of climb through the water and velocity. Seeing as how the latter's maximum is a nip over 20 mph, it's thoughtful of the programmers to have avoided tedium in long stretches of empty water by allowing travel in accelerated time.

Diving and surfacing is regulated by ballast tanks which contain either compressed air or water, so that the sub rises or sinks. Compressed air is produced by an on-board diesel motor, (which also recharges the sub's batteries). If there's insufficient air for the ballast tanks then the sub cannot elevate to the surface.

The sub's arsenal comprises a stock of forward firing torpedoes and antiship missiles which can be launched and guided to targets in

any direction. Any destroyed enemy freighters or destroyers are added to your tally of victims, but your own vessel is also vulnerable to collisions and missile hits from enemy destroyers. The extent of damage is indicated on a status panel. Two of the islands contain docks where the submarine can be repaired, refuelled and armed; a guidance display shows the distance from the nearest dock once you're within a mile of it.

### NICK

"Periscope up, full speed ahead. Ocean Conqueror is a really good submarine simulation. Once you've managed to get out of port the whole game explodes with addictiveness. Lighthouses, islands and even the odd convoy come into your periscopes view. A bit of lining up and away goes a torpedo and KABOOM (got that from Batman...) the ship is sunk, but keep your eye on the radar because you're about to travel over a coral reef! There are a few well-drawn islands out there too. Ocean Conqueror will appeal to most people, even if your burning ambition isn't owning your own submarine."

72%

### ROBIN

"Ocean Conqueror is in a similar vein to Hewson's simulation release Evening Star (reviewed on page 28) in that it takes a while before you can actually get anywhere. The instructions explain all the controls in detail but this doesn't seem to help that much. I spent ages just figuring how to get out of the dock. Once that initial frustration is overcome the game improves tremendously. Graphically it's nothing amazing, but the 3-D graphics are effectively used for islands and other objects. It's tricky to get into and potential buyers may be put off, but perseverance is its own reward, and Ocean Conqueror is the best submarine simulation to date."

80%

A variable magnification periscope occupies the top of the screen through which view approaching freighters, destroyers, drilling rigs, lighthouses, and islands are seen. As an added difficulty, fog may blunt the periscope, but the radar and sonar displays provide essential information on nearby targets, and further aid may be called upon – a map shows convoy coordinates and those of docks.

At the screen's centre, indicators further enhance your navigational capabilities by

### MIKE

"As a simulation, Ocean Conqueror appears quite accurate. The graphics are far from visually stunning, but they're effective and attractive. Strategy is an integral part of doing well, and though the instrumentation appears daunting at first, once understood the game is pretty easy to play – not so easy to succeed in, though! A likable game, worth considering for your collection."

79%

### THE NEW LABEL

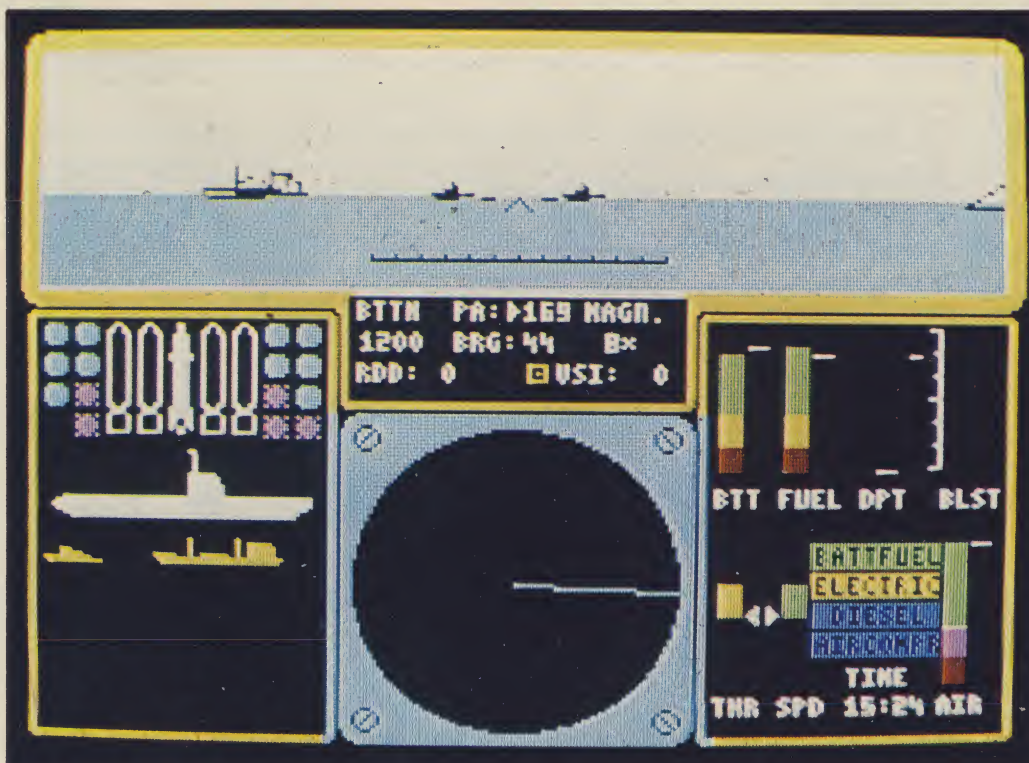
**Rack-It** is a new budget label from Hewson which was launched on 17 September. With increasing attention to 16-bit machines, Hewson feels there's an increasing need to provide pocket-money-price games for the 8-bit machines. Rack-It games are aimed at the £3 mark to allow a financial margin for developing more sophisticated programs than a £1.99 price would allow. There are two other programs in the first release schedule: *Draughts Genius* (reviewed on page 29) and the shoot-'em-up *Anarchy*, available soon.

### COMMENTS

Joysticks: Sinclair  
Graphics: 3-D, not stunning but functional  
Sound: atmospheric beeps  
Options: fog on/off, four skill levels  
General rating: the best submarine simulation in the fleet

Presentation	79%
Graphics	69%
Playability	70%
Addictive qualities	78%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>77%</b>

► Searching for a yellow submarine in *Ocean Conqueror*





## MEAN STREAK

Producer: **Mirrorsoft**  
Retail price: **£7.95**  
Authors: **Dalali Software**

**T**hink once, think twice, think bike – for in *Mean Streak* they're going to be coming after you, on this Sunday afternoon ride with a difference.

You're out there on the road, minding your own business, when a succession of computer-controlled psychopathic bikers try to bump and bore you off your two-wheeled chariot. And if that fails, they're not averse to taking a pot shot at you.

But you're not standing for that. You too can push attackers off the roadway, or get behind them and blow them away using the guns and missiles you just happen to be carrying.

But these fiendish bikers who have never passed a proficiency test in their lives aren't the only dangers lurking on the streets. Scattered across the blacktop are tin tacks to puncture tyres, rocks and oil slicks that can send you careering and make you vulnerable to an opponent's nudge, ramps that have to be cleared, walls that can flatten a

face, and gaping holes the council have forgotten. Lose control of your machine and you end up as an accident statistic with one of your three lives gone.

To avoid these odious

### ROBIN

"At first *Mean Streak* looks very promising, but successive plays reveal a lack of real substance. The graphics are simple but effective; it's the jerky scrolling that lets it down slightly. Here's a game requiring little in the way of instructions, and so it's easy to get into and enjoyable for a while, but I wouldn't describe it as addictive and it turns out to be a bit too frustrating – on several occasions when my player was killed off the exact cause of death was a bit dubious. *Mean Streak* offers some good ideas but repetitious gameplay and some slipshod programming knock it down a lot of points"

64%



obstacles, the bike can accelerate or slow down, be swung across the road or leap into the air.

► The *Mean Streak* battletrack (just past the Milton Keynes turning)

### PAUL

"I was immediately taken back to the days of *Spy Hunter*, speeding down the city streets blasting down all and sundry. It's a pity that there seems to have been little progress since those days. I had the impression Dalali plumped for monochrome graphics and diagonally-scrolling play area just to make the game more up to date. The shoddy implementation results in inaccurate collision-detection, making the game unplayable for the most part. While the bikers are well-animated and drawn with plenty of detail, the rest of the graphics seem to have been forgotten – and they're very average."

53%

### BEN

"*Mean Streak*'s an odd game. It resembles virtually all the other diagonally-scrolling games in feel and difficulty of control; somehow, though, Dalali Software has succeeded in making it playable. After a few lengthy plays I'm well stuck in and probably will be for an hour or two to come. The controls are a pain – fair enough, eight moves on one joystick isn't bad, but in a panic it's frighteningly easy to jump when you want to fire a missile. Nice graphics, nice gameplay, nice presentation – overall *Mean Streak* is a nice game."

75%

## EVENING STAR

Producer: **Hewson**  
Retail price: **£7.95**

**B**ack to the age of steam, when railway tracks snaked through the country and a British Rail sandwich had never been made, let alone eaten...

The eponymous *Evening Star* is a robust locomotive which makes the tricky run between Bath and Bournemouth on the Somerset And Dorset Line. In Hewson's simulation, you are the smoke-stained driver of this triumph of engineering. Your object is to reach Bournemouth on schedule, earning points for safety and economy.

The main screen shows the progress of the *Evening Star* as it puffs beneath bridges, huffs through tunnels and dashes past places luxuriating in such names as Wellow, Chilcompton, Henstridge and Binegar. But don't spend too long gazing at the countryside – there are heavy penalties for running late, especially if you choose to take out the flagship service, the Pines Express.

You control the train using a regulator for speed and a cutoff for engine efficiency, which can be tested by checking the colour of

the smoke coming from the engine's stack. Vacuum brakes, a blower, an injector and a fire door and damper also help you get the most from your leviathan of the railway track – but you won't get anywhere without water and coal, and supplies are limited.

Signals must be obeyed, or you risk a fatal collision on a one-track line; and speed limits can deter your boyish enthusiasm for driving a steam train recklessly. They must be adhered to, or you could lose safety points, or even be derailed.

### MIKE

"By today's standards the Southern Belleish graphics are a bit poor, with some huge jumps in the foreground. And though the accelerated-time facility is something of a godsend, *Evening Star* is by turns incredibly dull and far too complicated. If you're into trains and you haven't seen or played *Southern Belle*, you might find *Evening Star* fun; but it could almost be mistaken for a rerelease."

48%

And don't forget the passengers – the *Evening Star* has to make stops. Overshooting the station can lose you points, and at Bournemouth you might hit the buffers; brake carefully, too, or the travellers will be thrown into each other's laps and injured.

The main object of *Evening Star* is to reach Bournemouth with enough points to pass; options

allow you to challenge a time record or try to keep up with a strict timetable.

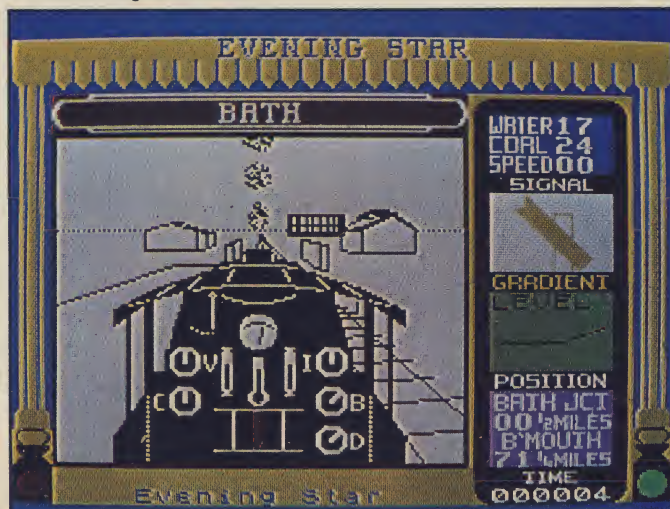
Hewson's (then Hewson Consultants') *Southern Belle*,

### PAUL

"So they've changed the name, but not much else is different from *Southern Belle* – it's all the basic repetitive actions from the last train simulation and more! And though the idea is appealing, after one trip down to Bournemouth I didn't fancy another laborious jaunt. The vector drawings are competent, and complement the footplate controls perfectly. But graphics aren't really important in this kind of game – it's the atmosphere created by accuracy that matters. So dedicated train fans will love the feel of *Evening Star*, but you have to be an enthusiast to enjoy it."

70%

### ► Star of stage and steam





Advance warning of the problems ahead on the scrolling screen is given *Defender*-style by a radar screen showing a vertical view of the road section with the position of your bike and opponents displayed.

Fuel, oil, missiles and tyres are in limited supply, though there are engine-refreshment cans and missiles on the road.

There are three restart cones that can be picked up as you ride onward; should you succumb to an unwholesome end, a cone will allow you to restart from the point where you picked it up.

## COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

**Graphics:** good main characters, marred by jerky scrolling

**Sound:** reasonable tune and spot FX

**General rating:** an above-average game that could have achieved much more with improved playability

<b>Presentation</b>	64%
<b>Graphics</b>	66%
<b>Playability</b>	67%
<b>Addictive qualities</b>	63%
<b>OVERALL</b>	64%

another locomotive simulation, received 84% Overall in CRASH issue 20 two years ago.

## NICK

"This one is more for the simulation buffs than the arcade freaks – it takes you half an hour just to digest the instructions! Some parts are quite playable, but don't buy Evening Star unless you're a train buff with a desire to control a steaming beauty."

39%

## COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

**Graphics:** simple, slow-moving vector graphics; monochromatic play area, colour on gauges and borders

**Sound:** only the *phweeep* of the steam whistle...

**Options:** a choice of eight levels presenting different problems; a computer-controlled run is also available

**General rating:** a detailed steam-train simulation for the buffs, very similar to *Southern Belle*

<b>Presentation</b>	60%
<b>Graphics</b>	54%
<b>Playability</b>	61%
<b>Addictive qualities</b>	49%
<b>OVERALL</b>	53%

# DRAUGHTS GENIUS

Producer: **Rack-It**

Retail price: **£2.99**

Authors: **Raffaele Cecco, Pablo Malnati, Giovanni Zanetti**

**P**laying draughts against a confirmed megagenius like Einstein could be a humiliating experience. Are you man or woman enough to do it?

Easy, you think – so, as you face Einstein across the draughtboard in the professor's front room (decoration by Oxfam...), the battle of two great minds begins.

But even Einstein is beatable; there are eight skill levels in this draughts challenge, one of the first releases on Hewson's new Rack-It budget label. If he's thinking too hard you can hurry him up by pressing Q, and on noticing a fatal mistake you can cancel the last move!

## ROBIN

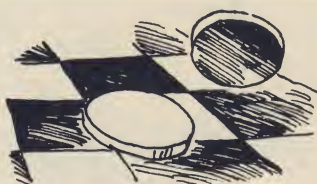
"Games seem to be heading back to the past, what with Breakout variants, Battleships and now draughts – where has originality gone? Still, Draughts Genius has everything you could possibly ask of a game based on draughts. The graphics are reasonable, with some nice attention to detail, and the computer offers a mean game – but remember you can buy a draughts set for about this price and the board can double as a chessboard!"

57%

## NICK

"Don't think this is just another boring draughts game – it's full of cute little animated sequences (like all the programming team dancing around the piano at the start, and the things Einstein does when he wins and loses). Colour is used well and the background on the main screen is fantastic. Underneath the fancy stuff there's a first-class draughts game with useful skill levels, and even if you're no good at draughts you can use the cheats to win in Draughts Genius!"

69%



To move, position the cursor on the piece you want to move, press the space-bar, transfer the cursor to the square you want to move to, and press the space-bar again to actually make the move. A counter shows how many moves you are into the game.

The crowd is breathless as everyone waits for Einstein's response. Then it's your turn to put the professor in a predicament again. If the chance arises try a multiple move, skipping like some demented leapfrogger across Albert's men and thus removing them from the board. (To make a multiple move, press the space-bar twice after moving the cursor to your target square.)

Impatient Einstein will tell you when it's your move and when it's his. And on winning or losing, you are either applauded by the genius or ridiculed for your pea-brained incompetence.

## MIKE

"Draughts Genius is good fun, and a worthwhile buy at not much more than a draughts set. The one-move-back trick is a good cheat, and Einstein is quite amusingly animated. This is worth getting, even though I can't beat Level 6."

79%

## COMMENTS

**Joysticks:** Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

**Graphics:** good perspective on the board, and attractive surrounds

**Sound:** tune to go with the opening dance routine

**Options:** eight skill levels

**General rating:** good implementation of draughts

<b>Presentation</b>	74%
<b>Graphics</b>	71%
<b>Playability</b>	68%
<b>Addictive qualities</b>	64%
<b>OVERALL</b>	68%

► Einstein takes a well-earned break from relativity





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CRASH October 1987 33





month in month out, as everyone else would too, no matter how interesting they were. Even your Forum is getting totally boring. There's been no really angry or interesting letters for ages, no silly or funny ones and no controversial issues of any real issue. The *Barbarian* cover was only an excuse to be disgusting on the part of Oli, and stir up a little excitement it did, but still who cares? If you feel so strongly about the mag's cover, don't buy it! Newsfield will get the message soon enough!

Excitement: What's that? Apart from colour CRASH has become stagnant. Apart from that *OINK!* thing (did anyone find that amusing in the slightest?) CRASH has done nothing interesting for years. Perhaps it's because you are the market leader, and are resting on your laurels. (It's worked for the past four years, why shouldn't it keep on working?) Well I'm afraid you're going to start losing readers unless you break from the norm fast.

Please take note.  
**John Hay, Dornoch, Sutherland**

*No controversy, sparkle, excitement or humour? Reviews so drab? Well, it's only a personal opinion, of course, but as a fairly close CRASH watcher over the years, I'd say the reviews were more tightly written, more to the point and without any loss of*

*humour or sparkle – but then, I'm biased. The magazine still gets through more reviews than almost any other comparable periodical, and manages to fit in numerous articles. Do you really want what you refer to as 'depth' in games reviews? Damn it all, they are reviews, not a replacement for your finding out what the games are about.*

*The entire tone of your letter suggests that no-one at CRASH has any regard for the reader other than taking their money off them. I suggest you have a go at producing a fanzine, as many CRASH readers do, and you might begin to realise just how much effort goes into every month's edition. And naturally, Oliver Frey just loves being disgusting, that's all he has time to do...*

**LM**

## CRASH BRITANNICA

Dear Lloyd Mangram  
I've collected CRASH since Issue Five, but I have lost a few old and precious ones, and I was wondering if you could do a CRASH Encyclopedia containing all the games reviewed, and what they got (apart from *Sabrewulf Ha Ha*). Then you could average out the CRASH's all time top 50

greats, for the normal games, adventure and a top 20 for strategy. You could also ask the readers to vote for the best all time game from *Wheelie to Starglider*. You could have this free with one CRASH (Christmas Special) or put the price up to £1.50 for that issue.

Off the subject now, and I have been wondering, what has happened to Matthew Smith's new game *Attack Of The Mutant Zombie Flesh Eating Chickens From Mars*? I have seen the adverts in CRASH for a few months, and wondered if you knew anything, like was it to be a platform game?

**Paul Coman (13), Barry, S Glamorgan**

*To some extent, I think we're about to answer your prayers Paul. Starting this issue there's the CRASH History with general details of events and software over four years. Additionally, the collectable series will be completed with a detailed index of all games over the period, and on top of that, plans are afoot for a special binder to enclose the whole which will probably have some extra special encyclopedic bits and bobs to go with it. Watch out for future issues!*

*Software Projects are being a mite cagey about *Zombie Flesh Mutant-Eating Chickens Attack Mars* and indeed its creator, so we can only hope...*

**LM**

chart.

1. *Glider Rider*
2. *Amaurote*
3. *Stormbringer*
4. *Leviathan*
5. *Starglider*

For sound FX *Amaurote* must be the best 128 game.

**C O Fulcher, Thorney, Peterborough**

*The reviews do mention any significant differences between 128K games and 48K, and yes we do play them on both machines. However, I do feel a little more attention might be paid to the 128 end, but in fairness, there hasn't been that much to write about, other than those games you mention.*

**LM**

## MORE MUSIC

Dear Lloyd  
I'm writing in response to your request for a chart of Spectrum music. This is for the best 48K tunes.

1. *Milk Race*
2. *Ghost Hunters*
3. *Agent X*
4. *Mikie*
5. *Terra Cresta*
6. *Renegade*
7. *Chronos*
8. *The Fifth Quadrant*
9. *Survivor*
10. *Rasterscan*

**J T Charlton, Dover**

*Any more computer deejays with charts?*

**LM**

## PLUS PROUD

Dear Lloyd  
I'm a +2 owner and proud of it, and so are many others, but the trouble is you keep trying to avoid 128s in your reviews. A few games that I think are very good because of their enhancement are *180*, *Gauntlet*, *Strike*, *Army Moves* and *Enduro Racer*, but in your reviews there's nothing to be seen about enhancement.

Do you always try games on a 128?

For other 128 users I've compiled my Top Five 128 music

## GOT THE VOTE

Dear Lloyd  
Thank you for the Spectravideo Joyball I got with my subscription – it's great and works brill with a Ram Turbo Interface. Being new to computers I wanted a mag with the best information on software. So I paid out for four mags, *C&VG*, *Your Sinclair*, *Sinclair User* and CRASH. CRASH got my vote and my money for a sub, there was no competition in choosing.

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Just a couple of things: what about a hardware surgery and previews on computer books, what do you think?  
**Andy Muirhead, Wilmslow, Cheshire**

*The only reason CRASH has avoided too much hardware or technical jiggery-pokery in books is that with every questionnaire, these subjects seem less and less popular. And most hardware is made in such a way that it's not really fit for surgery, more for the trashcan. Computers, of course, can be sent to reputable repair firms now.*  
**LM**

## CRASH COVER UP

Dear Lloyd  
This is the first letter I've written to CRASH, because I've never felt the need to before, but I believe credit should be awarded where it's due, so in recognition of this I must congratulate you on a most informative and very interesting all-colour magazine. It's brilliant. It's great. It's decent too.

Decent?  
I say decent, because I saw through (wish I could) the sly, deluding artwork on the Imagine ad for *Game Over* (the one with the naughty bits some magazines have been trying to cover up — Issue 43, inside back cover). The artwork was cunningly done over the . . . um . . . naughty parts, they weren't just plastered with a big, ugly splurge of some company's trademark, as in some magazines. In CRASH the naughty bits were disguised under some devious and stylish artwork. Is Oli responsible?

Speaking of Oli, I think his artwork is absolutely amazing. I'm just astounded at the sheer volume of work he gets through in a month, considering he circulates between several other mags. His covers, with the added touch of the CRASH logo (don't change it) stand out among the other periodicals, making them look drab. So all the disrespectful

ingrates who don't appreciate Oli's brilliance can go and "??£%!!!" And tell Oli not to feel discouraged and to keep up the good work.

And finally to sign off, I think the video reviews are a good idea, but you could review better-known films and also computer/film tie-ins. Also your Playing Tips section is very useful and helpful, but why do you wear a paper bag over your head?

**S Alam Hannan (14), Wood Green, London**

*The Game Over ad was one of those things Oli just couldn't resist, and felt we should do our best to retain the original as much as possible, rather than slap a logo over the well-proportioned lady's superstructure detail. For the technically minded (as they say in photographic magazines) the added bra was done by tracing off the shape onto art paper, lightly painting a black outline of the detail, and then Oli air-brushed the shape in black ink. This small patch was shot to film and a mask made to hold back the offending part of the original in each colour layer. Then the new piece was added to the blue and red layers only.*

*Am I giving away a secret when I say that someone from Ocean rang Oli asking whether he had the bit of artwork that they could use to make a large poster from? Unfortunately, his touching up was only on a small scrap of paper and it had been thrown away!*

*I like wearing a paper bag.*  
**LM**

## HOLE IN THE BACK

Dear Mr Mangram  
Could you please explain to me, how to put POKES into my computer, as I bought my computer second-hand, I didn't get a manual.

I've tried to put the POKES into the computer, but I don't know when to put them in exactly. I've tried to put them in at the beginning, and some way through

loading, but they never work. I have also tried to put them in through the MERGE"" but still they do not work.

Please help, I'm desperate.  
**Paul Watson, Stanley, Co Durham.**

*Paul Sumner says, there's a little hole in the back of the computer through which you stick them . . . no, he's joking. Actually, I'm surprised you're having trouble because it's really pretty simple. Unless otherwise stated in the Playing Tips POKE routines should be typed in before loading a game, checked thoroughly, RUN, and unless a DATA error*

*occurs the game should then load complete with the POKES firmly in place. Wherever that isn't the case, the tip almost always says so. Hope that helps.*  
**LM**

## SAFE TO STARE

Dear Lloyd  
I've just bought and read CRASH August 1987. My purchase of this edition was quite unintentional. I had meant to get the July issue with the OINK! pull-out in it. However, after reading the magazine I was no longer angry

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with myself for buying the wrong issue. I found your £1 mag well worth the money and, having only got a baby Spectrum, very addictive, enough so to want to go and update my Spectrum and try all the games you review so well.

Having finished with the praise, I wonder if you could help me. Do you know of any guidelines as to the legal or safe limit of staring at a television screen with regards to your eyesight. I work on an IBM at work, eight hours a day, and although I enjoy programming/playing games on my computer I'm a little concerned about my eyesight. Please could you advise me and other people to a safe guideline to using computers without damaging our eyesight.

**Maria Lyne, Shoreham-By-Sea, Sussex**

*To be honest, Maria, no, I can't. I'm sure tons of research into the subject has been done, although the very little I've read sounds inconclusive and sometimes hysterically silly. Certainly screen static can cause eyestrain and headaches for some people susceptible to it, and I guess no-one thinks it entirely healthy to spend hours, weeks and years peering a little green, orange or white characters on a small screen. At CRASH we've been staring at the darned things for well over three years (which probably explains why everyone keeps bumping into lampposts) with no discernable ill effects - but after fifteen years . . . I don't know. Often, I'm thankful for my good ol' Hermes.*

**LM**

## THE UNSWEET PILL

Dear Lloyd

I was very annoyed after reading your review of the new Spectrum +3. To start with it seemed like a good enough follow-up to the +2, despite a loss of memory in the RAM disk (nothing drastic). But I was really fuming when I found out half the add-ons made for the other true Speciecs don't work on this inferior machine, and that the extra port in its back has been made specially for Amstrad hardware! How dare Alan Sugar stoop so low as to mutate our beloved (true) Spectrum into a half +2, half CPC/PCW! All Mr Sugar has done is to use the Sinclair logo to try to sell this new model, gladly I don't think it will.

Also what is happening to your rating boxes since 1986, looking through issue 34 there were seven headings for ratings, then it went down to six, but from issue 42 (last month) we were reduced to five: Presentation, Graphics, Playability, Addictive qualities, and Overall.

What has happened? Has everyone's brain been worn out by the big calculation or something?

**Paul Smith, Kendal, Cumbria**

**PS** I thought the *Barbarian* cover of Issue 41 was really good, and if the people who complained about it were annoyed, I would advise them to take a look at some back issues of ZZAP! for some really gruesome pictures!

*Perhaps the real points about the +3 will only emerge when people start buying it in great numbers, but there's a lot of right to the argument that whereas Sinclair created an entire industry out of his machine, Amstrad are determined to keep as much of it to themselves as possible, and probably to its detriment in the long run.*

*Changes in the review ratings have been explained in each issue where they changed, but the plain fact is that over the years the original CRASH ratings have become outdated. I think it's fair to say that the current ones, and the comments too, fit the bill better now.*

**LM**

## BUGGED!

Dear Lloyd

When I read about a small fanzine and their extreme political views I felt I had to write and express my views on such an apparently blatant exercise by a few people to get some cheap publicity.

*The Bug* shows some alarming traits in its encounter with Creative Sparks. The most alarming one was politics in computing 'Politics' I first thought when reading your article *The Bug That Roared*, August edition. Since when has politics had anything to do with computing for fun?

Since the average age of CRASH readers is 16 years they are too young to vote, naive to politics and impressionable to such material as published by *The Bug*.

In addition to this *The Bug* and its political standing is also questionable. Note what Jaron Lewis said about Mrs Thatcher's contribution to their series on famous people.

I bet he wouldn't say that to Mr Kinnock's contribution.

May I remind you what politics has done to sport over the last two decades. What I'm suggesting is that as soon as politics gets into computing for fun then it would be ruined beyond repair.

From what I have read *The Bug* deserves to go out of business. I'm sorry if that sounds too harsh, but maybe it might do some good to the software industry as a whole.

**Michael Thomas (16), Leamington Spa, Warwickshire**

*I don't agree that 16-year-olds are naive on politics, but I certainly do agree that party and unionist politics should have no place in computer gaming. That's a pretty strong statement, Michael, so it's fitting that I have here a reply from *The Bug* themselves . . .*

**LM**

## LETTER FROM THE BUG

Dear Lloyd

After reading Tony Worrall's letter last issue we thought it necessary to reply, on behalf of the Editorial Team, to some of the points raised.

At present there are about thirty fanzines being published; how Tony can claim to represent them in his letter is beyond our understanding, especially as he has just entered the scene. *The Bug* is the longest surviving fanzine, we have just celebrated our third birthday, and like Tony we publish for love and not money. All profits are ploughed back into the magazine, and it is written after school and at weekends. The main objective is to provide an independent magazine which features un-biased editorial.

We have also gone through 'blood, sweat and tears' to produce issues of the magazine, as has nearly every other fanzine. There's no point Tony moaning about it, if you can't take the pressure, give up. Nobody forces you to make a fanzine.

We respect a software house's decision not to send us software, however, we see no reason why we should feature a company's games if they don't send them. If they wished to have a game featured it would be sent and not doing so clearly shows a wish not to have the product reviewed.

*The Bug* is not run by Jeffrey Davy as stated but by an Editorial Team. Perhaps if Tony had looked at our magazine or read the CRASH article properly he would have not made such a mistake. The Editorial Team does not support any particular political party. A magazine which fights prejudice, whether it be sexism, heterosexism, racism or any other prejudice, is not 'loony' as so crudely stated, merely humane. To see how this makes a difference why not send 40p and an SAE to us at 28 Leaside Avenue, London N10 3BU

CSD were in the wrong as our contract stated we would have complete editorial freedom. They breached the contract and knew it. I think this proves we do the magazine for the readers and *not* the money. If we had obeyed their orders and kept the contract (until they went bust) we would have put money before the readers. We have been supported by many people in the industry for standing up to CSD, we did not give fanzines a bad name and were not bought-off by 'the hand that feeds'.

During the contract, our

circulation was at 1,500 copies per issue, the advertising rates at the time reflected this high circulation. The advertising revenue went to pay for essential things like the phone bill and postage costs. If we were engaging in 'blatant profiteering' as stated we would not use the phone to obtain review copies and our service to the readers would suffer. Once again we were putting the readers before money. If Tony thinks fanzines should stick together, and that we should have charged a lower rate, why does he write letters like he did?

Towards the end of the letter Tony quoted Jeffrey Davy's view on a single fanzine making a difference. Obviously this was at the end of the letter and he was getting so into slugging us off he did not even think about the idea. A smaller number of fanzines with bigger circulations would have a lot more impact than many smaller ones, all saying different things. He may not like *The Bug*, but that does not mean that everything we say is rubbish.

Publishing nit-picking letters, such as you did, does absolutely nothing to further the interests of fanzines. Tony seems to call us hypocrites yet if we behaved the way he seems to want us to, we would be putting money before the readers. If this is what his magazines does, I think some self-analysis is in order before he calls us hypocrites.

**Jaron Lewis & Jeffrey Davy - Members of Editorial Team, The Bug.**

*I feel I have to defend my right to publish letters from readers with opinions, no matter how muddled or obnoxious their contents may seem to offended people. And in defence of The Bug's editorial team, I'm only too well aware of how office overheads eat the money and force a profit-consciousness on anyone who undertakes a venture like this, no matter how small it may be.*

**LM**

## A RITMAN RITES

To all CRASH readers I feel I must write and thank all those readers who put my last three games simultaneously into the Hotline Top 20 chart for the August issue. Possibly the nicest compliment is *Matchday* at number six, almost three years after it was launched. Thank you!

**Jon Ritman, London, N18**

*Go on Jon, rub it in, I know that's the one we didn't Smash when we probably should have . . . !*

**LM**

**Well that's my lot for this month. Soon CRASH Towers will be silent, the Spectrums will be stilled, the Cubs caged and the joysticks boxed. No, it's not the Christmas holidays, just that everyone will be down in London at the PCW Show (where, thanks to the miracle of publishing schedules, you could be reading these very words). So I'll have the entire place to myself - luxury. And if I get bored, I'll read some more of your letters, the ones you send to LLOYD MANGRAM, THE CRASH FORUM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**



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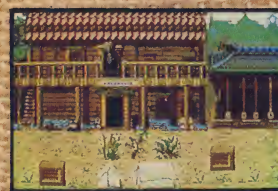
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**ocean**



**RUN IT AGAIN!**



There's been an explosion in martial-arts sims since *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*, as RICKY EDDY and ROBIN CANDY observe in this good beat-'em-up guide. And the ninjas just won't lie down – all they want to do is . . .

## THOSE BEAT-'EM-UPS IN FULL

*The Way Of The Exploding Fist*  
*Fist II*

*Gladiator*

*Yie Ar Kung Fu*

*Yie Ar Kung Fu II*

*International Karate*

*The Way Of The Tiger*

*Amazon Women*  
*Kung-Fu Master*  
*Ninja*

*Uchi Mata*

*Barbarian*

*Kick Boxing*

*Ninja Hamster*

*Renegade*

*Sai Combat*

# KICK HIGH

**T**HEY STARTED three years ago, when Bug Byte revealed an interesting little number called *Kung Fu*. It was an admirable wireframe attempt to produce a martial-arts simulation – 'probably the most unusual game to be seen on the Spectrum for a long while,' said CRASH in amazement.

But sceptics thought the genre would never catch on. It took Melbourne House to show them the way – *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*, which sold more than 150,000 copies for the Spectrum and nearly half a million across all formats.

Since then, nothing's kept the combat games down. They've been grotesque (*Barbarian*), skilful (*Fist*) and downright silly (*Ninja Hamster*).

The genre soon caught the nickname 'beat-'em-ups', as the gameplay always involves a player beating up his opponent, whether the computer or another player.

And with the advent of the 128s and their improved sound chips, the fighting effects became more hideous – the most disturbing beat-'em-up sounds must be the animal squeals in *Ninja Hamster*.

But most of these martial-arts simulations are so unrealistic, set in pseudo-Oriental fantasy worlds, that it's just harmless surrogate violence – and everyone likes a bit of that.

## NINJA HAMSTER

CRL

**62% Issue 43**

**ROBIN** ■ After many years abroad, Ninja Hamster returns to his homeland to find it overrun by evil creatures. Your mission as the Ramboesque rodent is to defeat them all in turn.

Graphically *Ninja Hamster* is very detailed, though some of the detail is lost

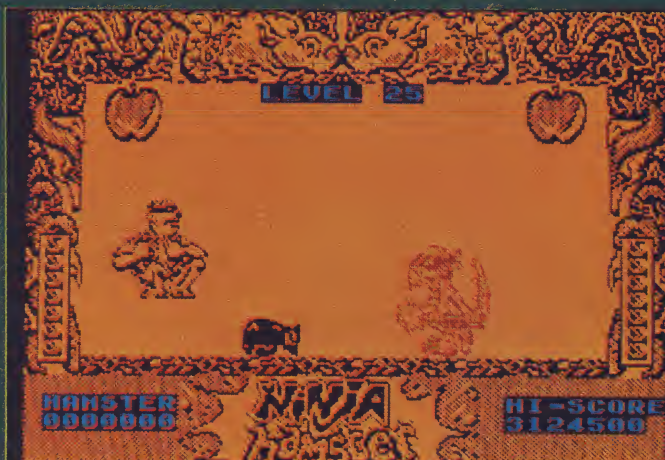
when the fighting begins. And it's easy to get into, despite problems with the keyboard – there are so many keys needed.

I feel *Ninja Hamster* was slightly underrated in the CRASH review; it makes a good beat-'em-up, though it doesn't leave any lasting impression.

**70%**

**RICKY** ■ And you thought hamsters were cute? Dig this baby for one hell of a fighting rodent, saving a village from Sinister Rat, Loony Lobster and a host of other monsters. The humour adds to this traditional beat-'em-up's appeal, but doesn't disguise a very average combat game.

**55%**



MASTER

## KUNG-FU MASTER

US Gold

**56% Issue 31**

**ROBIN** ■ In this conversion of a coin-op original, you have to rescue a fair damsel from the evil clutches of a wizard. As the eponymous master, you progress through five levels fighting off other kung fu warriors and assorted monsters conjured up by the wizard's sorcery.



## BARBARIAN

Palace

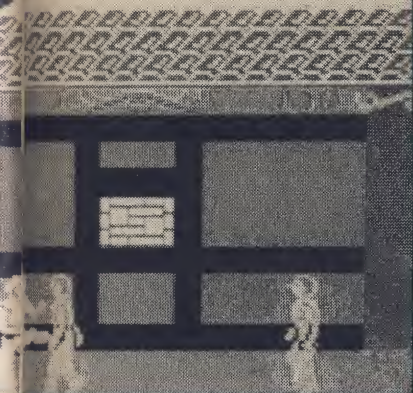
**85% Issue 41**

**RICKY** ■ Scream! Maria Whittaker!! Pornography!!! There was great moral outrage over the luscious lady who advertised this Gothic horror beat-'em-up – and over the notorious CRASH cover.

Fight your way through screens of beautifully animated bashing action to release Princess Marina from the evil Drax . . .

When you knock off an opponent in *Barbarian*, a deformed lizard creature trundles the body away. Little touches like this make the game worthwhile, though experts may find it a bit simple.





Moves for attack and defence can be accessed quite easily.

I was never impressed by the arcade game of *Kung-Fu Master*, and US Gold's conversion is terrible. Graphically it's inept, with attribute problems and flickery animation, and the gameplay is very boring. Though the arcade original was run-of-the-mill, a lot more could have been made of this licence.

49%

**RICKY** ■ I didn't think much of the coin-op *Kung-Fu Master*, and this is no improvement – *Scooby Doo* is a better game along similar lines.

38%



Still, *Barbarian* is one of my top combat games; *Fist* is wearing a bit thin these days.

Now programmer Steve Brown is developing *Barbarian II*...

90%

**ROBIN** ■ *Barbarian* is one of the best beat-'em-ups I've played. Most of the graphics are monochromatic, but this enhances the game rather than detracting from the super-smooth animation.

It's instantly playable, and for such a simple idea it's surprisingly addictive. The two-player game is one of the best features of *Barbarian* – you can invite your friends round for a slice'n'dice party. So if you want nothing more than a straightforward brutal fighting game, this is the one to get.

85%

## FIST II Melbourne House

58% Issue 38

**ROBIN** ■ Two years after the success of *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*,

Melbourne House released this follow-up. The warriors of *Exploding Fist* have been betrayed and their homeland has been conquered by an evil warlord. The player must find the temple of the religion of the Exploding Fist, and thus gain power to overthrow the tyrant.

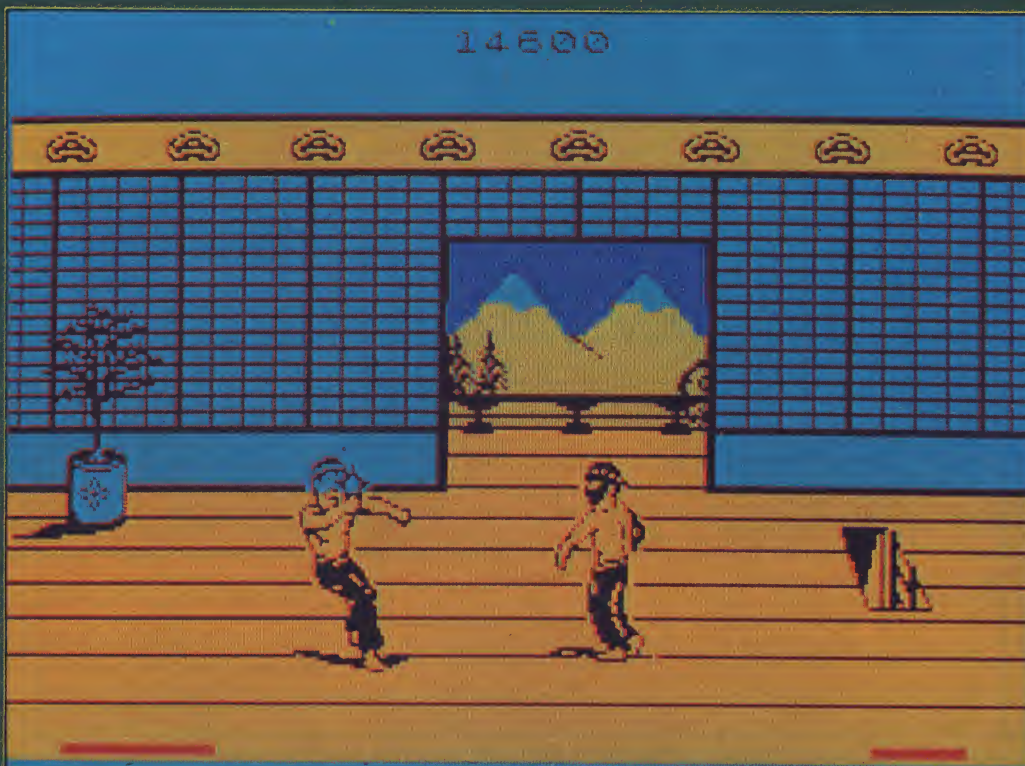
*Fist II* was a disappointment – it consists largely of walking around the many locations looking for an adversary to bash up. The fight sequences are

enjoyable, but the long periods between bouts are tedious.

54%

**RICKY** ■ A poor follow-up to the sensational original, *Fist II* lacks the compulsion of *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*. The background scenery repeats itself often, and there's not enough variety in the gameplay.

48%



## YIE AR KUNG FU Imagine

92% Issue 25

**RICKY** ■ From Konami's coin-op game comes a Smashing conversion. As the right 'onorable Oolong, you've got to become a kung fu master – so it's just as

well you have 16 moves at your disposal as you battle with nine opponents past the well-drawn backgrounds.

This is a good traditional karate game that stood up well when first released in early 1986. In light of more recent games, though, *Yie Ar Kung Fu* is going to have to

be content with a right 'onorable...

80%

**ROBIN** ■ Imagine's conversion of the hit arcade game is one of the most enjoyable beat-'em-ups. The background graphics are pretty, the animation is smooth, and *Yie Ar Kung Fu* really scores on playability, with the range of opponents offering some variety.

It's just a bit too easy – but it is a good game.

80%



## INTERNATIONAL KARATE System 3

68% Issue 24

**RICKY** ■ *International Karate* has just been rereleased by Prism at the budget price of £2.99. It's practically the same as *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*, but much cruder; the only significant visible

difference is in the backdrops, which take you around the world in five screens.

There are also bonus screens where you can earn extra points by shattering blocks of wood.

But playability is marred by the milliard of keys your fingers have to grapple with.

The game's one redeeming feature is the excellent speech as the scores are called out. I wasn't enthralled by *International Karate* – it's not very addictive or playable.

47%

**ROBIN** ■ *International Karate* took a long time to actually appear after it was first announced, and I wasn't impressed when I did see it. It still seems awkward to play, and the graphics are disappointing.

50%





## UCHI MATA

Martech

### 36% Issue 39

**RICKY** ■ *Uchi Mata* was the first judo simulation on the Spectrum. Traditional moves are executed in a novel way: rather than using a single keypress, the player takes the joystick through a series of actions which relate to a complete move. Four major moves are provided in the instructions, but more are there to be discovered by wiggling the joystick around.

*Uchi Mata* sounds exciting, but the novelties soon wear off and it's not long before you wish the sweeping joystick

movements could be reduced to a simple keypress. Though well-designed, the graphics flicker badly, and when the characters collide it's difficult to see what's going on.

51%

**ROBIN** ■ Judo is a strange martial art to simulate on a computer, because it involves a lot of contact with your opponent which others such as karate and Thai boxing don't. Martech made an admirable attempt at representing the sport in *Uchi Mata*, but the graphics are appalling and suffer from severe bouts of flicker.

What really bugs me, though, is the control method. It's one of the hardest I've ever encountered – trying to execute a move is almost a game in itself! If you like judo, stick to the real thing.

35%

## LEGEND OF THE AMAZON WOMEN

US Gold

### 70% Issue 29

**ROBIN** ■ Lady Wilde and her infant daughter are the only survivors of a plane crash in the Amazon jungle. Recovering from the shock of the crash, Lady Wilde realises that her daughter has been kidnapped by the Amazons, a horde of woman warriors.

To rescue her, Lady Wilde must defeat every Amazon in her way in a battle to the death.

*Legend Of The Amazon Women* is little more than an average beat-'em-up; there

aren't many moves, so it's quite easy to defeat your opponents. The animation is adequate, but not particularly impressive – like the game in general.

63%

**RICKY** ■ *Legend Of The Amazon Women* is a combat cross of Gargoyle Games's *Tir Na Nôg* and Melbourne House's *Fighting Warrior*. But it's dated and has little going for it. The animation is reasonable, but the uninteresting gameplay doesn't hold up.

51%

## GLADIATOR

Domark

### 77% Issue 24

**ROBIN** ■ *Gladiator* is a bit of a departure from the standard beat-'em-up. Playing the part of a lowly slave named Marcus, you enter the combat arena in a bid to earn some money and so buy your freedom; and in case your fighting isn't too hot, there's also a gambling session.

This beat-'em-up is special because the player can choose which weapons he wants to use. The weapons have attack and defence ratings which you can find

out only by trial and error.

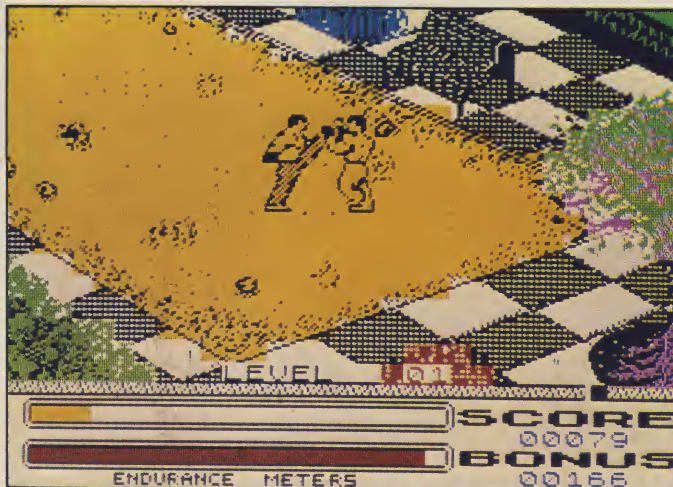
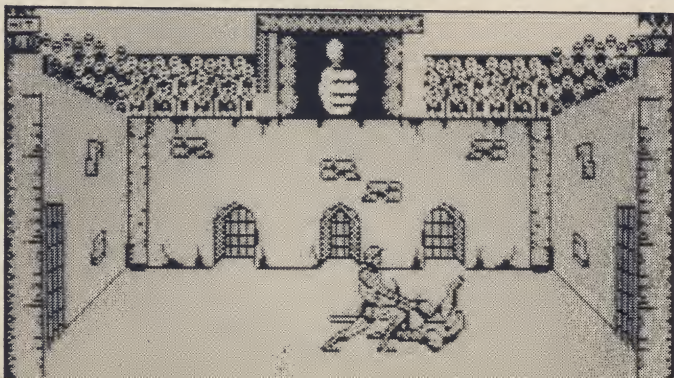
Graphically it's nothing special, the control method is tricky (there are 25 possible moves to choose from) and the imaginative gambling sequence becomes tedious.

Two years ago *Gladiator* was a good beat-'em-up variant, but now it seems only average.

52%

**RICKY** ■ *Gladiator* was one of the serious contenders to *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*, and it stood up well. However, it has aged and seems a bit repetitive. Still, it's certainly worth playing if you can get to grips with the awkward controls.

59%



## KICK BOXING

Firebird

### 41% Issue 42

**RICKY** ■ Meet mean man Mick The Meat Kicker – it's a name to be reckoned with. But I don't reckon *Kick Boxing* is up to much.

The playing area is done in isometric

3-D, but this doesn't affect the gameplay, apart from making it hard to see.

You progress through the levels by killing off one opponent after another, and it's no more inspiring than it sounds.

30%

**ROBIN** ■ I'd forgotten just how bad this is! Firebird's representation of the fast contact sport is appalling. The characters jerk around the screen drunkenly, performing poorly-drawn moves that appear physically impossible. There are better, similar games; *Kick Boxing* is cheap, nasty and almost unplayable.

36%



## SAI COMBAT

Mirrorsoft

### 81% Issue 28

**ROBIN** ■ Sai karate is like karate but uses a stick called a sai. This simulation pits the player against 16 adversaries; vanquish all, and you become a Sai Master. As in most games of this genre, the screen shows two fighters trying to beat the hell out of each other.

There's a two-player option for those

of you who want to hurt your friends, but this is only really playable with an Interface II unit – for the keyboard option you'd need 16 keys each!

*Sai Combat* is very playable, despite all those control keys; the graphics are reasonable, with smooth animation, though some of the backgrounds are a bit boring.

74%

**RICKY** ■ For a two-player kill-'em-up *Sai Combat* has some marvellous animation, but the gameplay becomes simple after a little practice.

72%

## NINJA

Mastertronic

### 50% Issue 37

**RICKY** ■ Get ready for the usual scenario which bears only some distant relationship to the backdrops and very little to the game itself.

A remote relative of *Ninja*, our hero, has just had his temple robbed by a bunch of evil ninjas. So off trots *Ninja* (the good one) to kill off all the other ninjas (the bad ones), who are still lurking in the temple. These bad ninjas have beautifully Oriental

names such as Thug.

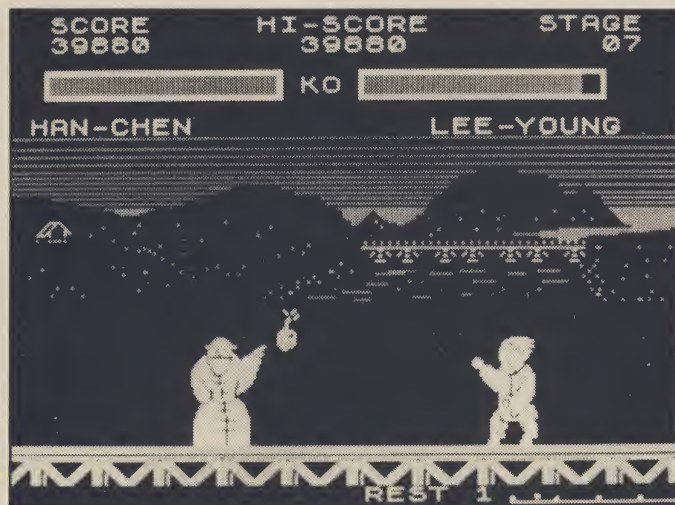
*Ninja* had potential, but it's amateurish and ridiculously easy. The enemies can all be killed with a couple of low kicks or by lobbing shuriken stars at them. So *Ninja* has very little to offer the dedicated combateer, despite its budget price tag.

30%

**ROBIN** ■ This budget beat-'em-up is one of the worst of the bunch. The graphics are very simplistic, with poor animation, and there's only the odd sound effect. It doesn't take long to get tired of *Ninja* – even though it's so cheap, steer clear of it.

39%





## YIE AR KUNG FU II

Imagine

48% Issue 37

**RICKY** ■ When Konami attempted to improve on *Yie Ar Kung Fu* by adding a bit ovva scroll and some 'wacky' opponents, it all ended up a bit ovva mess...

Oolong (from the first *Yie Ar*) has a son, aptly named Lee Young, who has vowed to wipe out the last of his father's deadly enemies – Yie Gah. But Yie Gah has many faithful Oriental minions, and Lee Young

has to battle his way through them to reach the master enemy.

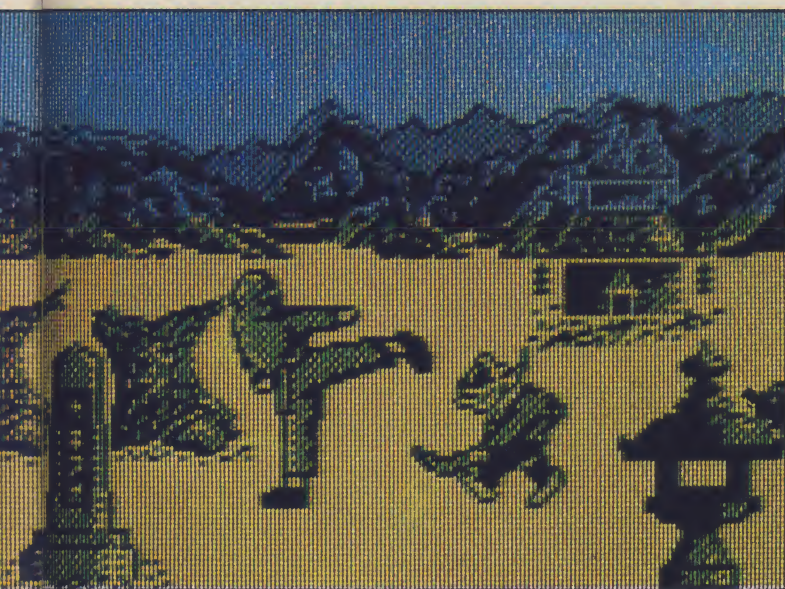
For every wave of minion attack eliminated, Lee Young gets a tea leaf, and when he has five tea leaves he can settle down and brew a cuppa to replenish his energy. There are bowls of chow mein to nibble from, too; these make Lee temporarily invincible.

The main fault of *Yie Ar Kung Fu II* is the level of difficulty – there isn't any. It's very simple, unchallenging and pretty dull.

32%

**ROBIN** ■ As a follow-up to a Smashed original, this is disappointing. It's not as beautifully presented or as playable as *Yie Ar Kung Fu*, and it's so easy to play. Don't bother with this mediocre effort.

42%



## THE WAY OF THE TIGER

Gremlin Graphics

93% Issue 28

**ROBIN** ■ This Gremlin Graphics licence is based on the Fighting Fantasy books of the same name. It's split into three distinct subgames which are loaded separately.

The first features unarmed combat, the second pole fighting and the third sword fighting.

They're highly enjoyable and very addictive – this is my favourite of the beat-'em-ups featured here. The

graphics are excellent, but it's the animation that really grabs the player. It's just so smooth. If you're going to get just one beat-'em-up, I can't recommend this enough!

**PICK OF THE KICKS**

89%

**RICKY** ■ This is one of the best beat-'em-ups, with some great graphic routines. The action doesn't quite have the excitement of *Barbarian*, though.

81%



## THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

Melbourne House

92% Issue 21

**ROBIN** ■ In this, the original beat-'em-up, the player has to fight through 11 levels to reach the rank of Tenth Dan. At your disposal are a whole host of movements, which are easily used with a joystick.

When this was released in the autumn of 1985 it was one of the most enjoyable games around, and even today I occasionally find myself returning to this golden oldie; *The Way Of The Exploding Fist* holds a special kind of magic because it was the first worthwhile game of its type.

The movement of the monochromatic characters is good, though sometimes a touch sluggish. Like many beat-'em-ups it's a bit too easy to be addictive in the long term, but the two-player option is fun, and *The Way Of The Exploding Fist* is worth looking at.

80%

**RICKY** ■ Despite its age, *The Way Of The Exploding Fist* has stood up very well, retaining its exciting and addictive elements. It's no wonder a game of this standard set off such a massive craze, and I'd still Smash it, so...

91%



## RENEGADE

Ocean

89% Issue 33

**RICKY** ■ Definitely the best beat-'em-up! *Renegade* is an epic of nonstop fighting with some original scenario touches.

What is the cause of all this violence, though?

It's Lucy – not just any Lucy, but your luscious Lucy, the love of your life. You're off to meet her, but on your way you run into violent street gangs intent upon mugging and killing.

There are six locations to battle through, each featuring a different set of villains – such as bikers, mad women, gangsters and evil mobs.

*Renegade* isn't too difficult, and it's a game you play more for high scores than for reaching the last stage. Fight, beat and enjoy till you can smell the blood.

**PICK OF THE KICKS**

92%

**ROBIN** ■ I was hard put to choose between this and *The Way Of The Tiger* as my favourite beat-'em-up – *Renegade* is just so good. It's not the hardest game in the world, but it's enjoyable.

Programmer Mike Lamb managed to escape from the one-opponent-at-a-time format typical of this genre, and presents the player with up to eight baddies onscreen to be defeated.

The presentation is very slick, it would be hard to fault the graphics and sound, and with plenty of gameplay this makes an excellent buy. Try to get *Renegade* AND *The Way Of The Tiger*!

88%



# TRANTOR

## THE LAST STORM TROOPER

The order of the solar system as kept for thousands of years by the people of Zybor was coming apart. Growing dissatisfaction in outlying planet bodies increased as their technological achievements reached greater heights.

Zybor reacted in the only way left to it whilst the technological advantage remained in its hands. And so Trantor was brought from out of the ranks of the warriors forces where a brutal streak and rebellious nature made sure his talents never realised their full potential. His credentials were perfect his mission was simple, to lead a band of outlaw mercenaries and smash the growing power of the New World NEBULITHONE before its atomic threat turned into an awesome cataclysm of conflict. But the Nebithons were not unprepared and when on return from a reconnaissance scouting, Trantor found the remains of his undercover force scattered amongst the alien landscape along with the last fragments of his battle cruiser, he felt the hate and rage surge through his body and within the ice cold compartment of his mind, he recognised the burden that now lay with him, that all now depended on he  
- Trantor, the Last Stormtrooper.

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Screen shot from Amstrad version.



Screen shots from Spectrum version.



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# THE CRASH SAMPLER



IT'S STUCK TO THE COVER – AND HERE ARE THE DETAILS!

Sorry we can't supply you with a cassette box, but it's so much easier to stick a cassette on a magazine cover than a bulky case. Still, if you cut out the cassette inlay below, you're absolutely bound to have a spare case lying around somewhere – aren't you? And now, onto the preview demo details . . .

## MEANSTREAK

Mirrorsoft, Mid October  
£7.95

A long way into the future the pleasure seekers of Britain are bone-idle, downright slob. Everyone who needs to get anywhere travels by molecular disassembly/assembly – so much safer than using the only existing road – the London Orbital, the M25. Known as 'The Battltrack', it's a place where a rebel

minority armed with lethal bikes race up the streets killing each other. You wanna see the action? It's mean, it's vicious, and watch out for low bridges when you type **LOAD**"" and sit back to enjoy Mirrorsoft's demo, which is also reviewed in this issue.

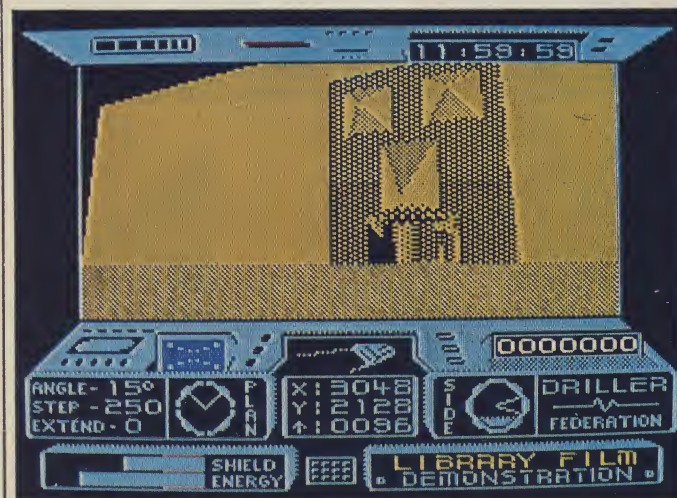


## DRILLER

Incentive, End October  
£14.95

You've seen the Freespace screen shots previewed – now see it in action as Incentive's *Driller* demo takes you through some puzzles from section one. *Driller* will have two objectives within the game, the primary task being to drill holes into the moon's surface to allow

dangerous gas to escape, and second to deactivate automatic defence systems which are causing a problem. There's on-screen text (press any key to move from screen to screen) describing the game, and it's **LOAD**"" to see *Driller* in ravishing 3-D.



## BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE

Gremlin Graphics, October  
£7.95

Squeaky clean arcade adventure antics in Gremlin's Walt Disney licence. This demo offers 15 playable screens to tickle your appropriate fancies. Bound and leap about to discover five clues which should help solve the mystery of what really

happened to Doctor Dawson. Keys are **Z**/**X** left/right, **K**/**M** up/down, **ENTER** to leap and **SPACE** to pick up or examine. Elementary clue hunting begins with **LOAD**""

## TRANTOR THE LAST STORMTROOPER

GO!, October  
£7.95

The first game from US Gold's new label comes from Probe Software and stars Trantor as the all-round good guy hero. Trantor isn't really the last stormtrooper – there's a load of the lads but, as you can see from the demo, when the space craft lands within a deep crater Trantor is the

only one to escape alive before the craft blows to smithereens. Now alone within the bowels of the planet he must fight for survival. The music is down-loaded from an Amiga and synthesises four-channel sound. **LOAD**""

THE CRASH SAMPLER

Brought to you in conjunction with . . .

Mirrorsoft  
Incentive Software  
Gremlin Graphics  
GO!  
Ocean  
Elite Systems  
Martech



THE CRASH SAMPLER



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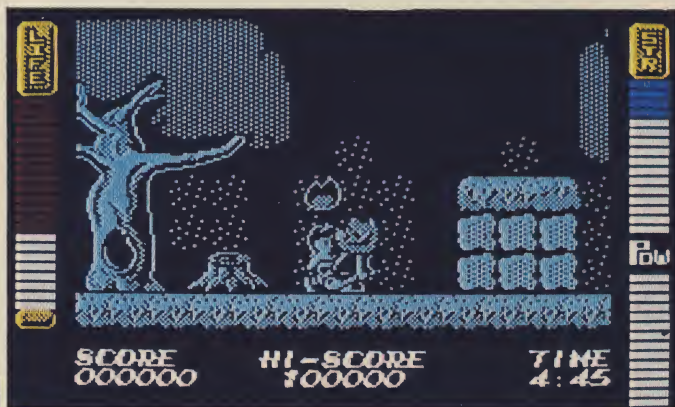
## ATHENA

Ocean, End September  
£7.95

We were hoping to have *Gryzor* as well, but development of the program continues even now. The review of *Athena* is in this issue, but here's a chance to try out the game yourself in this playable demo of the first level. Keys are redefinable, and there's a choice of joysticks. Athena is a formidable woman, belting her way through life collecting weapons and powers hidden behind the rock formations. Kill the ogres and other

assorted nasties. Time is constantly ticking down as the damage level increases. Be on your guard.

**LOAD**"" to load the master program, then **STOP THE TAPE**, select the desired keys or choose a joystick and then load in the playable first level. If you finish the level - don't attempt to load in another level even if the computer prompts you to - it simply isn't there!

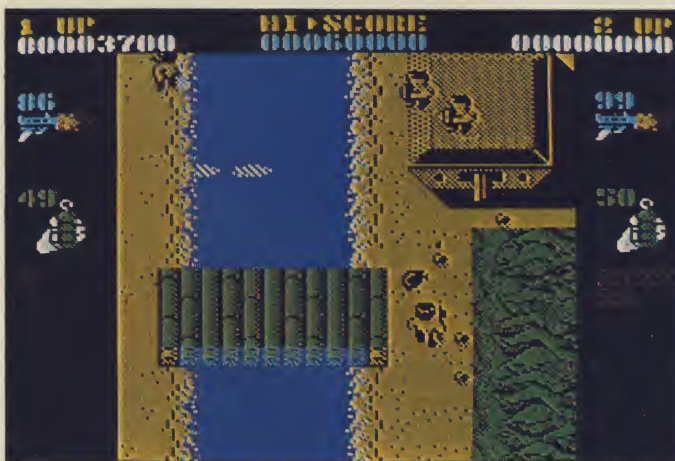


## IKARI WARRIORS

Elite, Christmas  
£7.95

Jungle life in Elite's long awaited arcade conversion. The two-player game, although you *can* go it alone, takes our hero through the jungle and swamp section of the game. Full on-screen instructions inform you about the control system - but once chosen it isn't possible

to select again. The full task will be to struggle through several levels to rescue General Alexander Cook - however, you can't accomplish that in our demo, it's just a good old fashioned shoot-'em-up. **LOAD**""



## SLAINE THE KING

Martech, October  
£7.95

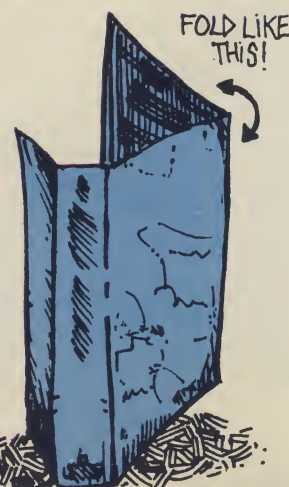
A demo of Martech's latest *2000 AD* licence with that weird control method. Gasp as you see Slaine's thoughts waft through his mind on the left of the screen! Thrill to the comic-strip pictures as you

see Slaine maim, kill and maim some more! And perspire to the pre-release hype on the top right. All this and more when you **LOAD**""



JUST CUT OUT THE INLAY AND FOLD WHERE INDICATED- USE ANY SPARE CASSETTE BOX YOU HAVE.

**SPECIAL THANKS GO TO:** Pat Bitton, John Cook, Dalali Software, Ian Andrew, Major Developments, Sue Quinn, Kevin and all at Gremlin Graphics, Richard Tidsall, Fergus McGovern, Probe Software, Gary Bracey, Andy 'Athena' Deakin, David Aubrey-Jones, Bernard Dugdale and the Elite crew, Data Duplication for doing the technical bits involving cassettes and the ladies at Carlisle who stuck them on the covers.



### SIDE A

MEAN STREAK

Mirrorsoft

DRILLER

Incentive

BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE  
DETECTIVE

Gremlin

TRANTRON - THE LAST  
STORMTROOPER

US Gold

Use the table provided to note the tape counter position of each demo

### SIDE B

ATHENA

Imagine

IKARI WARRIORS

Elite

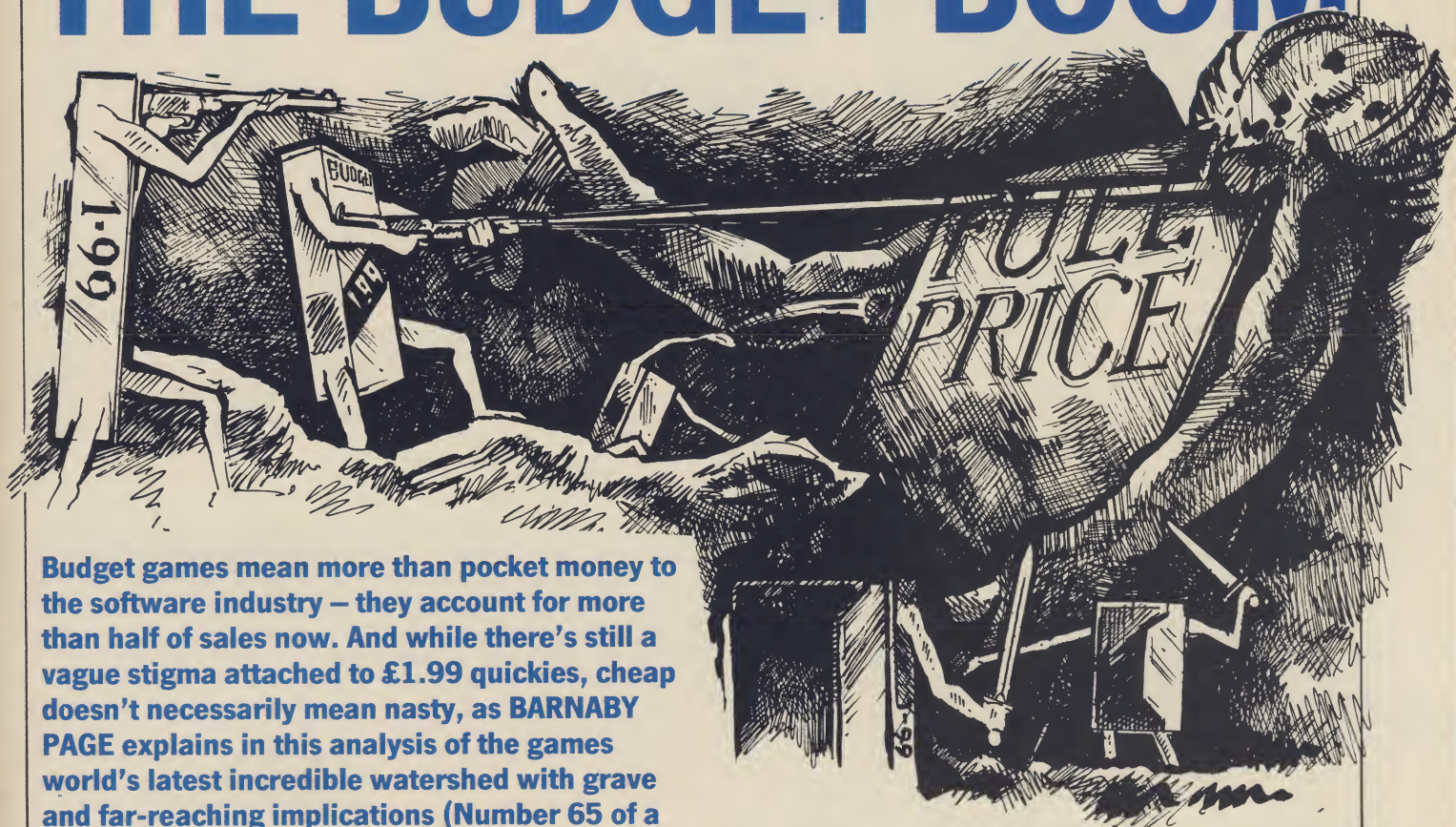
SLAINE THE KING

Martech

FILE NAME	COUNTER
MEANSTREAK	_____
DRILLER	_____
BASIL GRT MOUSE	_____
DETECTIVE	_____
TRANTRON LAST	_____
STORMTROOPER	_____
ATHENA	_____
IKARI WARRIORS	_____
SLAINE THE KING	_____



# THE BUDGET BOOM



**Budget games mean more than pocket money to the software industry – they account for more than half of sales now. And while there's still a vague stigma attached to £1.99 quickies, cheap doesn't necessarily mean nasty, as BARNABY PAGE explains in this analysis of the games world's latest incredible watershed with grave and far-reaching implications (Number 65 of a series).**

**T**HERE'S nothing like a good apocalypse to get this nervous industry excited. Every year, the pundits say the bubble is about to burst. Amstrad gobbles up Sinclair – whatever happened to gentility? CSD collapses – is this the end of distribution as we know it? American giant Electronic Arts muscles into the UK market – was the battle lost on the playing fields of Pasadena?

But perhaps the biggest bugbear this autumn is the boom in sales of budget software. When Mastertronic first launched £1.99 games three-and-a-half years ago, the flourishing industry laughed at them. Fact: Mastertronic has sold about 12 million games in under four years.

Now Mastertronic General Manager Martin Carroll claims his software house's many labels (M.A.D., Americana, Entertainment USA, Bulldog and the rerelease label

Ricochet, all budget) account for about 15% of all sales in the UK leisure software market.

And the Gallup market-research organisation reckons some 60% of all games sold this year will be budget – an estimate pushed up from less than 50% in the light of soaring sales. So far from being a pesky thorn in the side of full-price sales, budget is big business; some normally sober observers reckon the UK leisure software market is worth as much as £80 million a year.

Already, the figures tell a story: Mastertronic's Carroll will put out 10,000 or 15,000 copies of a game at once, while the first production run for a full-price product might be just 2,000

or 3,000 copies.

But reports of the death of full-price software have been greatly exaggerated, most industry bosses agree – because though budget and full-price are both battling for the consumer's money, they're fighting by different rules.

Full-price games sell quickly when they're hot and new, propelled up the charts by magazine reviews, ad campaigns and word of mouth – or they flop. As Code Masters Manager Jim Darling puts it, 'for a full-price game to succeed now there has to be something pretty special about it – and that's more to do with the licensed names and the hype than the actual product'.

Budget games are low-profile, unadvertised ('there's just not enough money to do it' – Darling), and there's not much profit on each unit. But they keep on going, casually bought like magazines in corner newsagents and garages, which the full-price games don't reach. 'A good budget game will sell for one or two or three years,' enthuses Darling, and as an example-in-the-making he cites Code Masters's *BMX Simulator*, released in the New Year, it 'hasn't dropped off at all'.

► **Mastertronic launching another 212 labels in its bid to stay on top of the budget heap...**

Some critics see the budget labels churning out cassettefuls of dross, scraping a few pennies and letting the pounds pile up any old how. But budget producers insist that they can't afford to release poor games – because the individual titles aren't well-known, it's the name of the label that makes or breaks sales. Indeed, even within the industry, it's the *range* – Reaktor, Americana, The Power House whatever – rather than the actual game which is promoted.

Darling of Code Masters takes an understandably optimistic view: 'The real reason for our success is quality of product. With one or two exceptions, we've not released any duff products.'

And he's dubious about the value of full-price hype, saying 'the manufacturing and distribution end of this industry underestimates the ability of the end users to know what they're buying and make an intelligent purchase.'

Darling also gives credit to his archival, acknowledging that 'what Mastertronic proves is that for £1.99 or £2.99 the kids can get games as good as they used to pay £8.99 for.'

One dissenting voice: Electronic Arts supremo Trip Hawkins. 'If you buy a book, you expect it to be well-edited, well-printed and there to be no typographical errors,' he pontificated in a recently-published interview. 'If you buy a record you expect all the instruments to be finely-tuned... with budget software, a lot of the production values aren't very good.'

Strangely, though, rerelease budget labels like Elite's £2.99 Classics haven't sold very well – even when the games were Smashes available at a fraction of their original price. It's those crazy, crazy markets.

## NICE LITTLE EARNERS

Though the profit margin on budget games is tiny, overheads are low – cheap packaging and duplication, often minor bargain-basement programmers – and budget labels produce far more games each month than their full-price counterparts. 'The key to success in budget publication is low overhead and high production run,' says Mastertronic's Carroll with authority.







► 'Why pay more?': advertising spends are low for budget houses, so Code Masters is experimenting with holding up signs in fields – the 'grass-roots marketing' technique

## AN UNEXPLORED BIT IN THE MIDDLE

There's another side to the story, though. About half of all budget games are sold through small outlets such as garages and CTNs (confectioner/tobacconist/newsagents), but the rest go through specialist software shops and the high-street multiples, where they positively profit from the presence of hyped-up full-price packages.

The goggle-eyed sprogs of industry myth wander along the software racks and pick up an £8.99 game – and when you're blowing a £10 note anyway, you don't miss another couple of quid, so the consumer picks up a budget game on his way to the till.

Perhaps the psychological appeal of buying, obtaining, means that budget games will never quite supplant the higher-priced products and their fancy

packaging. And, to be fair to the full-price games, it's not just a matter of glitter; some of the best software will always be full-price because budget producers can't afford to spend a long time programming or to pay the teams of specialists for sound, graphics and so on which big games require.

Maybe that's why *b\*\*\*\*\** is still a dirty word. Take the Playability By Design team (*U.C.M. – The Ultimate Combat Mission*): they don't do budget games, oh no, they do 'low-price full-price games' which Mastertronic happen to sell at £2.99, according to programmer Dave Thompson.

It's not so easy to really make budget games in the full-price style, though. Production methods are different for budget houses, and so is distribution to those all-important CTNs. Budget games have to get everywhere because they're not hunted for as specific titles; 'sales and distribution are extremely important because they're radically

different,' according to Firebird Publisher Chris Smith.

Budget packaging serves a different purpose, too. Whereas full-price packaging can be glossy and impressive, the inlay for a budget game has to tell you something about the unpromoted title itself.

That's another reason why 'it'd be very difficult for a full-price house to go into budget', as Smith comments.

It's more likely that the full-price labels will lower their prices to a midrange compromise – £5.95, say, as Software Projects did earlier this year – and indeed some wild estimates put the 'average' price of 8-bit software as low as £7.95 already.

'It's going to get harder to maintain a full release schedule on 8-bit at full price,' says Firebird's Smith. 'As 16-bit hardware gets cheaper the 16-bit machines will be the 'quality' end and the 8-bit mostly budget except for a few special projects.'

Mastertronic's Carroll agrees – 'budget may well take over for existing 8-bit machines,' he says, because 'the quality difference between budget and full-price has narrowed'.

A firmer forecast comes from Martin Currey, Sales Manager at R&R Distribution (which handles the Top Ten budget label among others, and owns Alternative): 'Full-price software is going to drop a couple of quid. There will be a situation where it'll remain a steady balance; I don't think budget will take over.'

'There'll be two distinct price levels after this Christmas: £6.95, £7.95 at maximum, and then your £15/£20 level.'

And, of course, there'll be the budgets selling away, mostly at the variants of £2 and £3 (£1.99, £2.95 etc).

## END OF WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

So budget *has* boomed, and software houses like Mastertronic have proved that you can produce quality games, sell them at a quarter of 'full price' (whatever that is) and still make a tidy profit.

The retail trade is convinced, too – when Woolworth decided to reintroduce software to its shops in autumn 1986, the cautious chain tested the water with budget games in 70 shops and *then*, when that was successful, realised computer games do sell and risked full-price software as well.

One producer, Ocean's David Ward, dreads budget taking over the high-street multiples. When deciding what to stock, many chains assess sales value per foot of shelf – and of course a few feet of budget games drags down the value per foot of the whole software section. Despite the Woolworth move, Ward fears budget may force *all* games out of the high streets.

Still, many full-price houses have decided that if they can't beat the budget specialists they might as well join 'em, and launched budget labels: witness Hewson's Rack-It, with its first releases this month (see page 27 of this CRASH), distributed by market leader Mastertronic. Only a few have shied away from the budget battleground: Ocean, Activision and Elite (burned by its Classics experience), for instance.

As the characteristically self-confident industry paper *Computer Trade Weekly* proclaims, 'budget has won the intellectual battle; it appears to be winning the commercial one as well'. That's software for you; another day, another crisis...

# MY POLL IS BIGGER THAN YOURS

**THERE ARE LIES**, damned lies, and sales figures. Everyone accepts that Mastertronic sells more 'units' than any other budget house, but there's a constant barrage of statistics as the also-rans fight for second and third place. ('Units'? A separate game and a compilation each count as one unit. Market share is usually measured in units sold, not income.)

Telecomsoft – that's Firebird – claims 11.6% of the whole games market and therefore, by Publisher Chris Smith's reckoning, about a quarter of budget sales. He'll settle for second place after Mastertronic, but insists 'we're closing the gap rapidly'.

That's news to Jim Darling at Code Masters, who says 'we probably sell more than Telecomsoft'. Statistics from the Gallup software sales charts give Code Masters only about 15% of the budget market – but, according to Darling, that's because Gallup doesn't poll enough of the CTNs where Code Masters sell.

Nonsense, says Alternative's Martin Currey, worn out and tetchy after a hard day of thinking he sells more than Code Masters.

Even Mastertronic General Manager Martin Carroll quibbles: 'The Gallup poll consistently underestimates our market share because of the preponderance of W H Smith in the chart sales.' He reckons Mastertronic takes 30% of the budget market.

Ears must be burning in Gallup's north London number-crunching headquarters. Social Surveys (Gallup), perhaps the country's best-known pollsters, compiles the weekly music,

video and software charts as well as political surveys, opinion polls and market research.

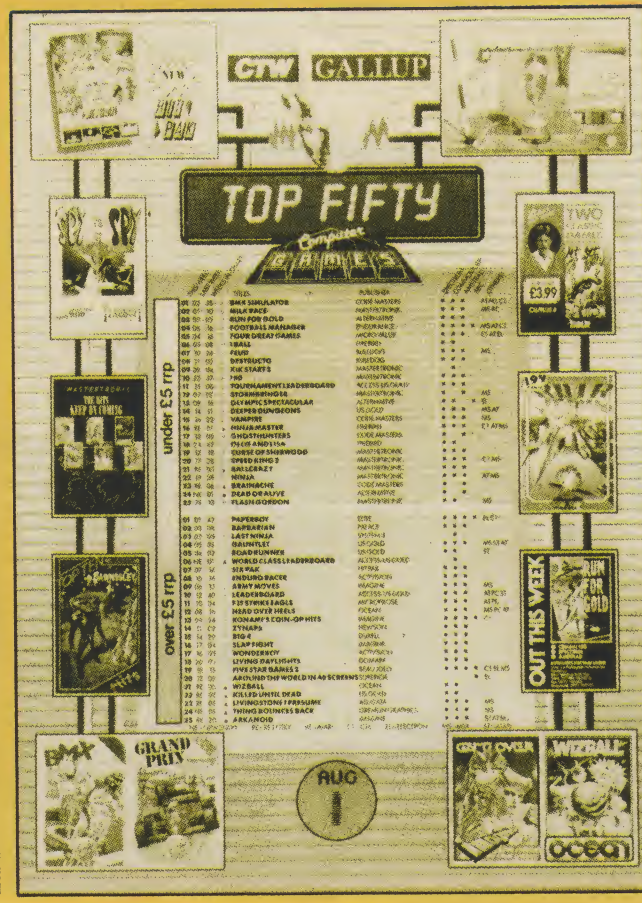
The Gallup software chart originally listed each week's 30 top-selling games. It was changed in mid-July to the Top Fifty Computer Games – but it's actually two charts of 25 titles, one covering full-price games and one covering budget games. They're considered different products – perhaps because they do reach different markets and sell for different reasons.

Every week, Gallup sends a list of games to about 150 shops around the country. The shops fill in how many copies they've sold of each title, and Gallup compiles the results, publishing them each week in *Computer Trade Weekly*.

The charts annoy some software producers because they don't reflect CTN sales as well as they do high-street chains and computer stores; and, as R&R Distribution/Alternative's Currey points out, a slow-selling budget game may not show up in the charts because shop assistants 'forget to put things down which did sell but only sell one or two'.

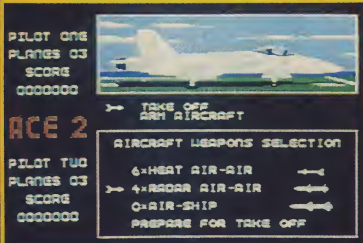
Still, 'Gallup's all right as long as you don't trust it 100%', he says. There's not much choice – retailers depend on the charts. Says Woolworth buyer Nigel Wood, who chooses software for the whole chain: 'We're going in a very clear direction – the Top Fifty'.

And Wood reckons those top 50 account for 65% of games sold each week. They may not be perfect, but you can't ignore the charts.





# ACE 2



- ▶ High speed one or two pilot action.
- ▶ Computer opponent has advanced artificial intelligence at 20 skill levels.
- ▶ Comprehensive options.



Commodore 64 Disk ..... £14.95  
Commodore 64 Cass. .... £9.95  
Spectrum 48 Cass. .... £8.95  
Spectrum 128 Cass. .... £9.95  
Commodore Plus/4 (64k) ... £9.95  
IBM PC ..... £19.95  
Atari ST ..... £19.95  
(IBM and Atari for Christmas)

- ▶ Air-air and air-ground combat.
- ▶ Real time, real space action.
- ▶ Equipped with two aircraft types and a variety of modern missiles.



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Screen shots are taken from the C64 version.

**ACE 2**  
THE ULTIMATE  
HEAD TO HEAD  
CONFLICT



# IT'S HERE, IT COULD BE YOU

The CRASH warriors have earned their stripes – but come December it will be time to test YOUR skill in a fight for survival when Imagine unveils *Combat School*. We spill the bacon 'n' beans...

KONAMI is back with Imagine for a special licensing deal – *Combat School*, an arcade game guaranteed to wreck many a joystick when launched this Christmas. The arcade machine has been around for several months, eaten bankfuls of coins and strained a few wrists in its short lifetime.

*Combat School* is exactly what it sounds like – an American army training camp where unless you're made of steel, you've no hope of making it through the seven levels to qualify for *The Mission*, an extra game at the end.

It's like a combat version of *Track 'n' Field* – the faster you can wiggle the joystick (or trackball for the arcade machine) the more speed/power you build up to race through the events. It's for two players, or one with a computer opponent – both playing simultaneously, with a split display on some screens.

The Spectrum version is written by Andy Deakin, who brought us *Labyrinth* and *Mega Bucks*; it's his second game for Imagine. (Andy's first was *Athena*, on this month's CRASH Sampler.)

*Combat School* will be a 48K multiloader in order to squeeze in all the levels, but 128K should manage it all in one huge load. And it just has to be that way – Imagine defies anyone to squeeze this little lot into 48K...

## test one

### THE ASSAULT COURSE

Hup an' over in the first event against the clock. There are loads of hazards, such as walls and monkey bars – and all the time you've got to waggle like mad to keep up speed and leap to the top.

## test two

### SHOOTING RANGE I

Kambooom! Shoot the targets as they pop up from the ground – be quick or they disappear again as fast as lightning. To qualify you must hit 40 targets.

## test three

### IRON MAN

Tough enough to take part in the Iron Man cross-country race, huh? Scrambling over rough terrain, you splash into the roaring, white water of the rapids, into canoes and through the rocks... all in record time.

## test four

### SHOOTING RANGE II

More kaaboooms and noisy stuff, but this time with moving jet cars which speed across the landscape faster than you can say 'another 40 hits to qualify'.

## test five

### ARM WRESTLING

This trial of strength features in so many films – but Paul Newman and Steve McQueen had it easy. See how tough it is wrestling a

joystick! The more wiggles per second the more power you get.

## test six

### SHOOTING RANGE III

And yet more kabooms! This is similar to the first shooting test in *Combat School*, except you mustn't hit the targets displaying a picture of your Instructor – no matter how much you'd like to blow his brains out by this stage.

## test seven

### INSTRUCTOR FIGHT

A real fight to the death – or at least to the knockout, against the Instructor who's taken you so lovingly, so carefully through this course of training. Beat him and you're ready for...

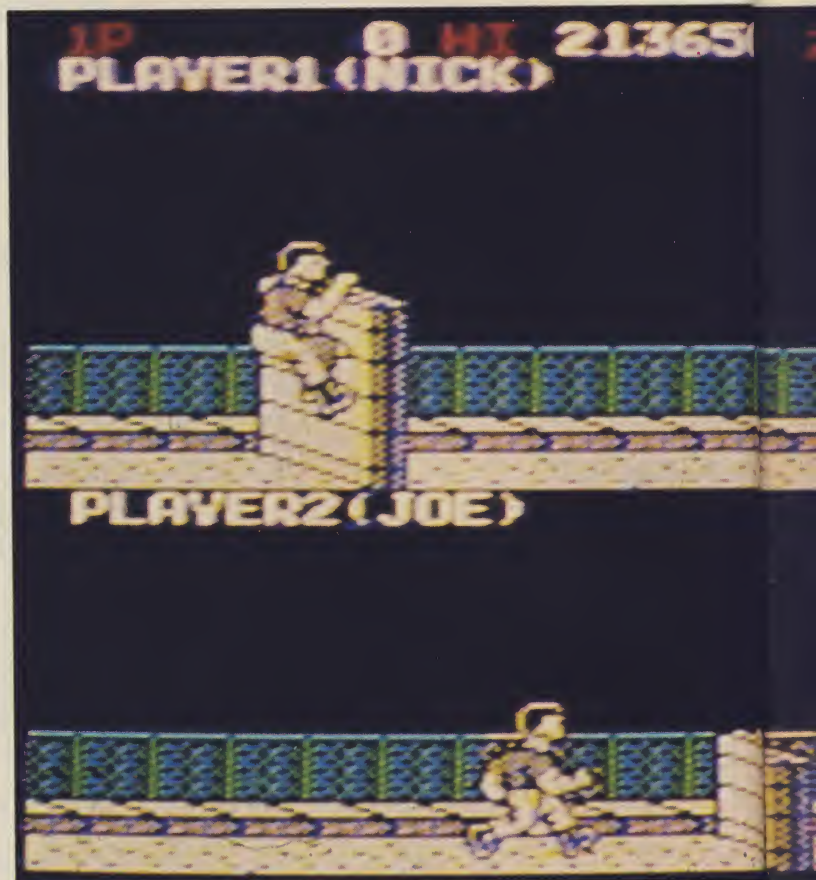
### THE MISSION

This is the big one, the one you've gone through gruelling training for. An embassy siege is taking place and you've been selected to battle your way through a horizontally-scrolling landscape to free the hostage. The world relies on you!

## penalty test

### CHIN UPS

If you don't reach the qualifying score in a *Combat School* event, the Chin Ups screen appears – complete enough chin-ups within the time limit and you can carry on. If you fail, the Instructor bellows 'go home to your mothers' – that's the type of guy he is.



► A screen from the Spectrum version of *Combat School*



► Lots of kabooms, tough guys and strained wrists from the coin-op that's been coining it in, Konami's *Combat School*



# YOURS, IT'S IMAGINE'S . . .



# COMBAT SCHOOL

## WIN A SPECIALLY-DESIGNED IMAGINE COMBAT SCHOOL ARCADE GAME



Who else but I, Joe Comps Minion, could receive so much joy from giving away an arcade game? Yes, an arcade game in your own home!

BUT WAIT – this is no ordinary, overdecorated arcade cabinet; Ocean and Imagine began developing arcade games in suitcases so their distant programmers could play the originals for the purposes of programming. After all, who wants to lug damned great cabinets around the country?

So for the first prize in this special competition the winner will receive a complete, handmade, custom-designed and reasonably portable (see panel) Konami *Combat School* arcade game, complete with a Tatung Einstein monitor. It's worth around £1,000.

(If you're reading this at The PCW Show, you can pop down to the Ocean stand and take a look at the arcade game yourself.)

To get your hands on this amazing prize, correctly answer the five Imagine

questions below. Three overall winners will be picked and then whisked by Imagine (travel expenses paid) to their hide-out in gloriously sunny Manchester, there to take part in a *Combat School* play-off.

Only one clear winner will emerge complete with the Konami arcade package. But the two unlucky runners-up won't really be that unlucky – they'll receive Imagine goodie bags stuffed with T-shirts, mugs, games and other bits and pieces.

20 further runners-up will get copies of the Spectrum *Combat School* when it's launched at Christmastime. And so, your starter for ten is . . .

1 Which game launched the new Imagine label in early 1985?

- 2 Who was the author of Imagine's private-investigator game *Movie*?
- 3 Who was the hero in Imagine's *Smashed Yie Ar Kung Fu*?
- 4 Which company produced the original *Green Beret* coin-op on which Imagine based its game?
- 5 How many events are there in Imagine's *Hypersports*?

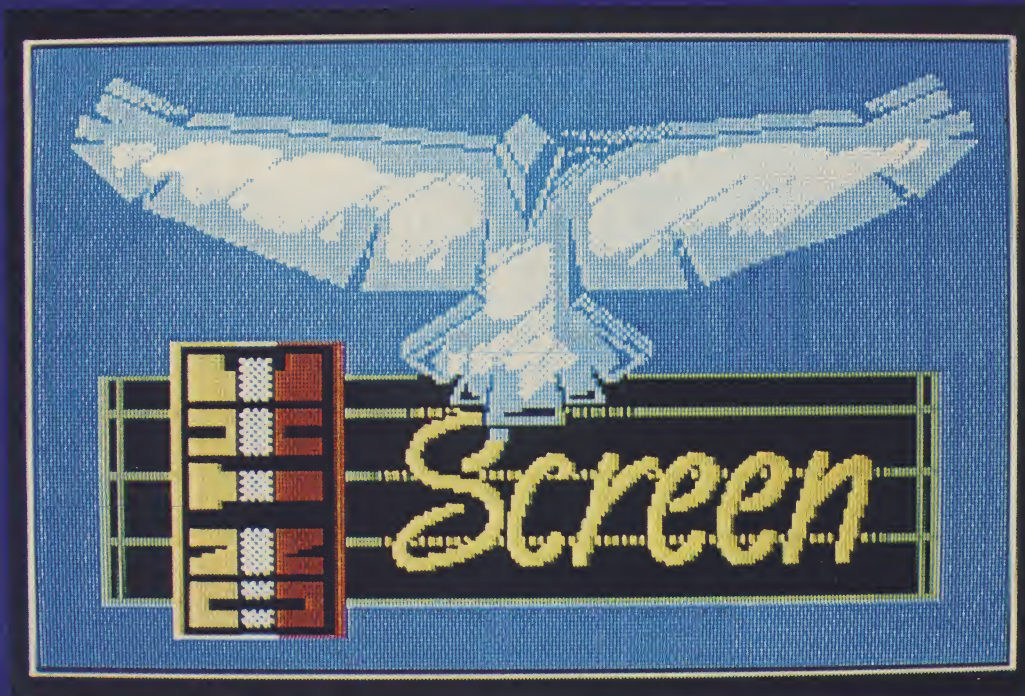
Answers, please, on a postcard (or the back of a sealed envelope) to **COMBAT SCHOOL COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. Don't forget your name and address – and a telephone number would be handy. All entries must be in by October 25.

### IMAGINE'S COMBAT SCHOOL ARCADE GAME

Normally the Ocean/Imagine custom-built arcade games fit in a very portable, metal camera case with a joystick socket and fire buttons. However, as *Combat School* requires a built-in trackball, the designers don't know yet how big the case will be – hence the phrase 'reasonably portable'! But I'm assured it won't be bigger than a medium-sized TV cabinet . . .



# HE SQUEAKS, OT



## THE WINNER

I was surprised by the number of new logos received for the competition (most done with on of Rainbird's *Art Studios*), and the standard was far higher than I expected. Still, that shows how much I underestimate you.

There were a few problems. A lot of the screens were too colourful, and too many of the pictures were devoted to overused, unoriginal ideas. Things like artistic utensils – pens, pencils etc – got a bit monotonous after a couple of million screens. Still, it's over now; congratulations and commiserations to all those who want them.

And Simon McCarroll of Wirral in Merseyside wins the ultimate accolade: his colourful, bright, and attractive *On The Screen* logo wins him a copy of Rainbird's *Advanced OCP Art Studio*. His Rainbird is a particularly neat and uncommon feature. So this is the one that's going to be on top of me for the foreseeable future...

MIKE 'THE MOUSE' DUNN, star of stage and screen dump, gazes into the enigmatic Speccy – at winning entries for the Issue 43 *On The Screen* logo comp sponsored by Rainbird (on this page), AND the usual gallery of your screens (opposite)



## SECOND PLACE

I couldn't resist this one – it had to win something. The Jetman character brings out the best in this screen from Paul Dilks of Beeston, Nottinghamshire.

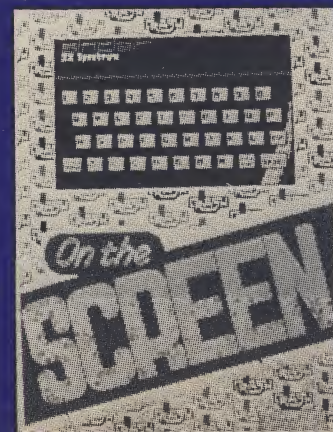
## RUNNERS-UP

Unfortunately Roger 'I hate pictures' Kean wouldn't give me much space to print the other runners-up... still, in fourth place comes Matthew Arnold of Newport Pagnell of Buckinghamshire, who must have drawn this picture of a Spectrum with his monitor on its side!

And the fifth winner is Mr P Stavers of Ashbrooks in Sunderland, whose entry was notable for its effective lettering.

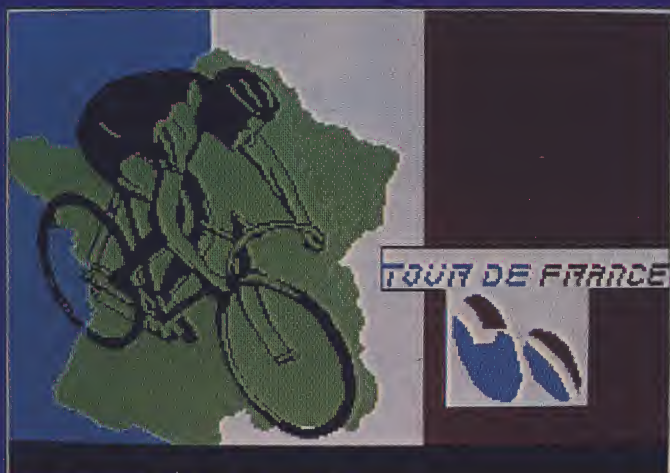
## THIRD PLACE

Andrew Swan's chunky Spectrum and test-card background draw attention to his cute logo. Andrew hails from St Andrews in Fife, Scotland.



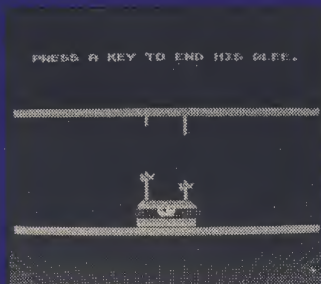
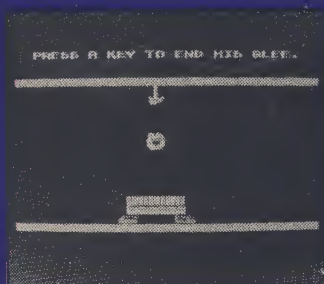
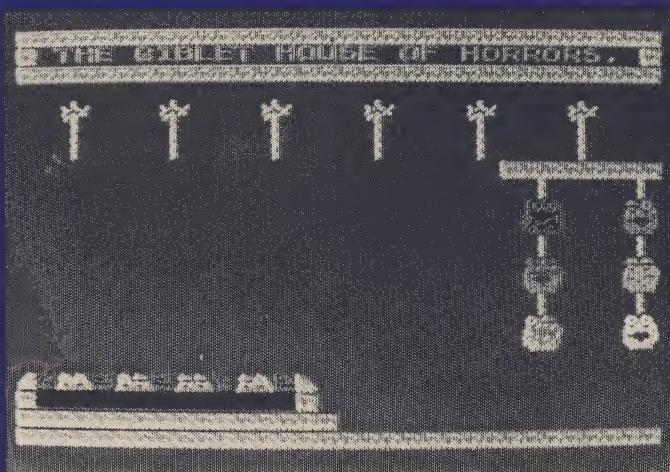


# OTHERS LISTEN



## TOUR DE FRANCE

Francis Lee from Handsworth in Birmingham sent in a very good tape with some neat screens. The first one, *Tour De France*, uses lots of colour, and has been well drawn; the cyclist fills up the foreground and the French flag in the background gives it that extra bit of style!



## GIBLET

Daftness award of the month has to go to the duo who call themselves Simac; their demo program is completely mad, and brilliantly funny. Called *Giblet* (perhaps after the animation team who did the videos for Jackie Wilson's *Reet Petite* and Westworld's *Sonic Boom Boy*, among other things), their demo features a little green creature – Giblet.

It seems Giblet has annoyed you with some trivial prank; now the poor beastie (boy) finds himself strung above any suitably evil punishment you choose. The terrors range from a bed of six-inch nails to a hundred-mile drop. Fun for all the family ... sort of ...

## LUNA JETMAN

I goin' prin' this! You just can't get away from him, can you? A big, fat, cowardly yellow loony superhero floats loonily past a space mine ... Mark Otway of Shepperton in Middlesex is responsible for this unparalleled looniness.



## DIVA

Another Francis Lee piece, *Diva* is based on the film of the same name about which I know absolutely nothing but which film buffs Kean and Page assure me is a very chic movie set in Paris which was all about an opera singer whose name they can't remember and it has a very good motorbike chase and came out in about 1983. So there ...



Phew – finished for another month. It's Saturday morning, the streets are filled with tourists, the birds are singing in the trees, and I've just got my O level results.

I may be overqualified for CRASH now – but if you've got any good screens still send them to Mike Dunn, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB – remember, if your entry is printed you get a full-colour framed'n'mounted screen dump courtesy of Rainbird. (And if you want your tape back, send a stamped self-addressed envelope with it.)



# NOW FOR COMPUTER

# MASK™

## The Battle Continues!!!

Join with the forces of MASK, skillfully commanded by the brilliant strategist Matt Trakker and combat the evil of the villainous VENOM in their quest for domination of the world. No longer need you stand by and passively observe the evil deeds of Mayhem and his co-conspirators. Here is your chance to dig deep into your cunning and put your skills to the test against possibly



the greatest master criminal the world has ever seen, fact or fiction.

This classic conflict of good versus evil is portrayed with a realism and excitement that can only take its lead from the world's most famous collection of superheroes and supervillains. There are creations of adventure, there are creations of combat but there is not a creation quite like MASK!!!

SAY GOODBYE CONDOR

MAYHEM!!!

BRAD! THIS IS THUNDERHAWK  
HOLD ON, I'LL SOON BE  
ON HIS TAIL...

MASK™ AND THE ASSOCIATED TRADE MARK ARE THE PROPERTY OF KENNER PARKER TOYS, INC. (KPT) 1987

## GREMLIN

CBM64/128 & Amstrad - £9.99 TAPE  
£14.99 DISK

Spectrum 486/128K - £7.99 TAPE

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS Tel: 0742 753423



# BREAKING IN

**Homegrown software stops here; professional programming starts. It's not easy to make that quantum leap, however great your games are, because the business is a jungle – but, as programmer DAVID LESTER explains, all you need is luck, a head on your shoulders and a good pair of shoes (for trudging the streets).**

**L**EAF THROUGH the computer press, and you'll find a different kind of ad, not promoting a game or a discount shop but *looking for* games, or other programs, or programmers. The software houses do want to see your games if they're any good – but today's market is very sophisticated, so it's important to prepare very carefully before you send in your work.

The place to begin is the program itself. Before contemplating publishing it, you need to be sure that it's the right sort of thing. It needn't necessarily be in machine code – for some applications, other languages are sufficient. But for most programs speed is important, so you should either use machine code or a compiled language which can be translated easily into machine code. For arcade games, in

particular, it's unlikely that you'll achieve the needed speed and quality of graphics without machine code.

But this should not put you off if you can't program in assembler or a compilable language. There are several very good programs on sale which will do the programming bits of designing a game for you – mainly for adventures. Such utilities began with Melbourne House's *H.U.R.G.* in the distant past of 1984, but now there's also Gilsoft's *PAW* (*The Professional Adventure Writer*).

When you've written your game, you should then try to view it in a different way: as if you were buying it, not selling it. If you can, ask a friend to give his/her opinion about it – not just saying how

good it is, but how it could be improved. It should be fairly easy to start, so that people can enjoy it from day one – but very difficult to beat, and ideally getting harder as the player gets further into it.

## PROFESSIONAL TOUCHES

There are lots of professional touches which can turn a good amateur game into an excellent commercial-standard one. Go through all the screen displays, and tidy them up till they look right – easy to read, pleasant to look at, showing the right information in a graphically-exciting way. It's surprising just what a difference simple things can make: redefining the character set, for instance, or putting in skill levels so that beginners can enjoy it as much as hardened addicts.

Sound effects are important, too.

First impressions are crucial – if the first few screens are bad, then you're unlikely to find a firm to take it. A well-designed loading screen can help, but more important than this is the title screen. This should be interesting, moving in parts if at all possible. Credits can be fun, or you can use several screens.

'We're looking for three basic characteristics,' says Ocean Software Manager Gary Bracey: 'originality, graphics (though these can be slightly altered if necessary) and most of all playability, which every game must have.'

Look at games already on the market





for other ideas – but preferably adapt others, not simply copying them, which might breach their copyright.

## NO RIGHT TO COPY

Copyright is important – it's protecting your rights. You might have written the next *Elite*, but if a software house you send it to claims it's written by them, not you, how can you prove it?

If you can, protect the game from people breaking into it; then, in the code, include several copyright signs, with your name and the date you put them in. You should also display this clearly on the screen – either the title screen, or even the normal game screen displays.

Then, to prove that the game really has been written by you, post a copy of it (always make several copies of the latest version of the program) in a well-sealed envelope to yourself by recorded delivery. When it arrives back at your home, don't open the envelope; the game is sealed within, which gives you proof of the date on which you completed it. Legally, your copyright in a game exists as soon as it is written – it's proving that date which is difficult.

Instead of posting it, you could leave it with your bank in a safe deposit box but the banks charge for this, and you need to have a bank account, too.

Or you could consider the National Software Register (see the article with this feature).

## PRESENTATION POWER

So that the software houses know what your game is about, you should write quite detailed instructions, perhaps with some hints on how to get deep into the game quickly. Also, record a copy of the game onto a new, clean cassette. The more professional the program looks, the easier it will be to see its commercial potential.

Now you should be ready to send the next Number One to possible publishers. Try to spot similar programs to yours already on the market; if they are very similar, select competitors of the firm which publishes them – no software house will market two games the same. But if a particular house just publishes games in a similar style (like arcade, strategy, war, or adventure games) then it's worth approaching. Says Firebird's Colin Fuige: 'When designing a game compare it with our present range – that should give you some idea of what we're looking for.'

It's sensible to send a game to several software houses at once – that way, if they like it, you have a better idea of what sort of offer you can expect, and sometimes you can play them off against each other to get the best deal.

Choosing an appropriate software house is especially important if your program is slightly specialised – a utility or strategy game, for example. Firms such as PSS and CCS specialise in wargames, while Tasman might be worth approaching if you've written a companion program for a word processor.

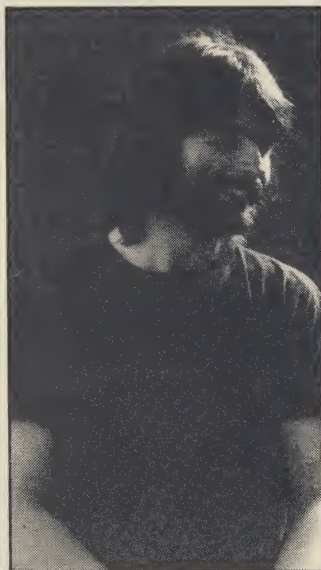
But while software labels are becoming more markedly specialised, many of the big names are owned by the same few firms – so if you submitted your new game to Argus, for the sake of argument, it might be marketed as a Quicksilver title or on any of five or six other labels.

You might consider writing to budget software companies. Mastertronic, for example, would probably sell so many copies of your game that you would make just as much cash as if it were marketed by a slightly smaller, full-price software house – though advance payments tend to be smaller from budget companies.

And some firms (for example, Tynesoft) are even buying programmers' work specifically for compilations of new games.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

With the increasing sophistication of the games world, you might fear that any game you produce at home can't be as good as something produced by teams of programmers working full-time for the larger firms. Well, the problem is surmountable. If a software house likes your idea it can provide help to improve the details of the game; lots of firms now have special music and graphics programmers. (Indeed, some houses – such as Code Masters – have been advertising for such specialists recently, and there'll be a feature on their work in the next CRASH.)



► Programmer Pete Cooke: good product sells, not big names, he says

Even if you feel your game isn't quite up to today's (mostly) high standards, you can still sell just the design and leave the software house to do the coding and create the game. Copyright is a particular problem here, because though particular chunks of code, text and so on can be copyrighted it's difficult to protect the general concept of a game.

## CONTRACTING UNIVERSE

A contract is crucial for any agreement, no matter how well you get on with the software house – it's amazing how friendly some crooks can be when they want to exploit your work.

Programmers agree that a contract is essential, whether it's the formal 30 pages that Mirrorsoft offers or a two-page job from The Edge. But occasionally a software house will try

to get you to sign an exclusive contract, so that when you sign your name on the proverbial dotted line and agree to assign it the marketing rights to *Jet Set Willy 17*, or whatever, the contract also legally obliges you to offer the same firm first refusal on all programs you write for the duration of the contract.

This should be avoided at all costs. If you do want to write more than one game for the same firm (which many programmers do when they get on well) you're free to do so, but if you've signed an exclusive contract and things go wrong you might have legal problems trying to write new stuff for other firms.

Try to retain the actual copyright to the program and sell just the marketing rights to each particular computer version; that way you control conversions and will get paid for them. (Usually the original programmer gets only royalties from conversions; whoever writes the conversion program gets a lump sum.)

One problem with retaining the copyright is that you'd have to pay your own legal expenses if you wanted to take someone to court for breach of copyright. But a friendly software house would probably help – after all, it's in the publisher's too to prevent rip-offs.

Try to include a clause which automatically returns all rights assigned under the contract to you in the event of the software house going bankrupt, ceasing to trade, or being taken over by new bosses with different ideas. History has shown that even the most seemingly stable of software houses can go bust at very short notice.

Check what is said about foreign sales – these often yield slightly less royalties than UK sales, but some software houses do more business abroad than in the UK. Also check to see whether the contract makes any contingency plans for your title being sold to a compilation, which is another growing trend.

It's sensible to include a time limit within which the firm must have launched your title. (On one occasion, I agreed to license the rights to a game in May, and it still wasn't launched that October; in the November, the software house went bust!)

It's usual, too, to set a limit on how long the software house has rights to the game. Contracts usually run for two years, but limiting it to one year means you can negotiate with budget firms or compilations for the rights after the game's sales at full price have died down (most arcade games reach their sales peak within a few weeks).

## OF BIRDS AND BUSHES

And now the big bone of contention – how should you be paid, and how much? Most people prefer money now rather than the promise of it in the future; but you have to weigh up several factors. How much money will royalties give you (no-one can really answer that accurately), and over how long? How much interest can you earn on the lump sum being offered, and does it amount to the difference between likely royalty earnings and the lump sum? How much are you prepared to give up for the certainty of getting something?

There are no pat answers. Programmer Christian Urquhart (*Daley Thompson's Decathlon*) reckons you might get about £5,000 as an advance and as much as 20 per cent royalties on all sales, on a typical contract, but then what's a 'typical' contract? Other

estimates place the royalty figure closer to 10 or 15 per cent.

Ideally, you'll be offered a nonreturnable advance on royalties, which gives you the best of all worlds: money now, yours to spend or earn interest on, and potentially high earnings if sales go well.

What royalty rate should you accept? Budget houses will inevitably offer you less money per copy sold than full-price houses will, but a budget game can sell ten or more times as many copies as a full-price. Try to get some estimate on sales figures from the software houses you talk to, and calculate likely royalties.

Differences in advertising, distribution, the label's reputation, packaging, and how much fine-tuning your game will get – all can affect sales.

Be careful to note whether the royalty rate you are offered refers to the retail price (ie what the public pays for the game in the shops) or the wholesale price (ie what the shops pay the software house and distributors for it), and whether these figures include VAT or not. Your payment will be calculated from the 'basic' price, which doesn't include VAT.

If you hear dodgy things about a firm, leave it well alone; most industry gossip has some foundation, and even if a firm is simply unpopular that can mean lower sales or bad reviews in some magazines. Probably most sharks have been found now, but some may still be lurking around – so talk to other programmers with the software house before you sign a contract and see if they're well-treated. 'Most programmers are taken for a ride from the start,' says Jon Ritman (*Head Over Heels*), burnt by an early experience: he got only £150 out of his first published game, the successful *Namtar Raiders*.

Finally: don't give up too easily. Just because you're new doesn't mean you won't succeed, even though some software houses receive as many as 100 games a week from hopefuls; unlike (say) the pop industry, explains programmer Pete Cooke (*Micronaut One*), 'it's not about an image' – software houses are just looking for good games. And if you honestly believe yours is good enough to sell keep hawking it around till someone agrees with you!

research: DOMINIC HANDY

## SIGNING ON

**THERE'S NO LAW** in Britain specifically governing copyright on computer programs, though other software centres like America and Japan have such legislation. To protect games – or other software – here it's essential to have proof that you wrote it, and of when you wrote it.

That's what the National Software Register provides: it's an impartial, though profit-making, organisation which programmers can use. You simply send in a tape or disk with your work on and for a fee the NSR will store it – for as long as you live and 50 years thereafter. (When an author's been dead for 50 years his work passes into the public domain – no-one can hold the copyright.)

The NSR's Gerald Coleman sees a growing legal problem in software copyright. 'After all,' he says, 'there will come a time when the output of computer programs exceeds that of the published word.'

Contact the NSR at 235 Chase Side, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 0RA.







Lloyd  
Mangram

# PLAYING TIPS



## MONTY CORRECTION

It's boo-boo time (you know I never make them really), and another spanking for me. In Issue 43 the POKES for *Monty On The Run* had one line missing. Line 30 should read LOAD""CODE. It must be my eyesight getting bad or something because I could have sworn it was right on John Bramley's letter. Oh well, thanks to Andrew Swain for pointing that out, and I'm sorry for any inconvenience it may have caused (but cheats never prosper, my old granny told me).

The garden's gone berserk, what with steamy rain, tropical heat and a full schedule at CRASH Towers. Sadly, no-one yet has come up with a POKE routine for weeding, pruning and incinerating the resulting rubbish. It's small consolation that the mail bag's full this month of POKES, cheats, and maps for getting through games, but there you are.

There are POKES for Hewson's *Zynaps* as well as *Great Gurianos* and *Airwolf II* from Elite's *Trio* compilation, and of course the usual wild selection from that great POKEster Jon North. But this month's top Tipster Award goes to Mark Hannan for his map of *Imagine's Game Over*. That's £20 worth of software on its way to you Mark.

## MICRONAUT ONE

Stuart Henny and Garry Sinclair (any relation of Sir Clive?) from Scotland were playing *Micronaut One* when they came across some extremely useful tips. Being...

1. Collect the small clouds which float about the tunnels as these increase your energy.
2. Destroy all of the webs, this is done by shooting the grey blob.
3. Don't shoot the eggs, it wastes too much energy.

4. Only attend to the ETUs when they are at danger status or critical, otherwise you waste time.
5. The other objects you see in the tunnels are there just to get in your way, don't waste energy shooting them.
6. The first three levels are the tunnels of Ceres, the tunnels of Ganymede and the tunnels of Phobos.

## AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY SOLUTION

The travelling rodent has at last found the solution to his quest in *Auf Wiedersehen Monty*. It comes from Mark Balham of Ipswich, and he informs me it isn't the only solution. Mark finished the game with 25,823 on the clock, so if you can better him you should be doing well. Just follow the list, l is for left, r is for right, d for down and u (amazingly enough) is for up.

From the start go u, u, u, get ticket, u, l, r, d, r, u, r, only get the left cheque, l, d, d, r, get football, l, u, r, leave cape, l, u, r, r, u, l, r, r, l, u, l, r, u, l, r, get cork, l, u, l, r, r, d, d, r, l, u, u, u, go left through the wall, d, l, r, u, go right through both walls, d, r, r, d, r, u, d, l, u, u, l, leave beer, l, u, d, r, r, ticket, u, l, touch boy, r, d, u, u, u, fly, d, get steering wheel, u, fly, d, d, l, ticket, fly, d, r, r, u, r, l, u, u, l, get mona lisa, u, r, u, go right through wall, d, r, r, r, get tools, d, touch cable car, d, u, l, l, u, l, ticket, r, fly, r, u, l, r, ticket, d, d, u, fly, u, d, l, l, r, r, d, r, d, l, fly, l, r, d, d, r, u, r, d, l, l, d, r, d, r, d, r, d, l, ticket, fly, ticket, d, d, r, d, touch lady, r, ticket, d, r, d, l, d, u, r, u, l, d, d, l, touch fence, r, u, u, fly, ticket, fly, d, d, r, r, r, d, r, d, r, ticket, fly, get bacon, d, d, d, fly, r, d, u, fly, d, r, d, r, d, r, d, l, AND THAT'S IT! (Remember to collect all the items that are not stated above except tickets.)

## GALLETRON...

... didn't appeal to Al and Rick from Pirton, Hertfordshire, so they broke the protection and discovered a wee cheat mode.

When the game has loaded, press SYMBOL SHIFT once so everything stops. Then press C

and a message should appear saying 'cheat mode'. When play begins you'll be blessed with infinite lives, but an old Indian guru once told me that immortality isn't all it's cracked up to be.

## TRIO POKES

Elite System's great compilation, *Trio*, has received a lot of attention from the POKES and Tips world. Here are a few POKES from Tony Sollars of

Leatherhead, Surrey, and David Wilson from Ayr in Scotland for *Great Gurianos*, and *Airwolf II*. I'll be printing some 3DC POKES as soon as I receive some.

### GREAT GURIANOS

- 1 REM MULTIFACE ONE OWNERS CAN POKE 34962,0
- 10 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7: BRIGHT 1: CLS
- 20 CLEAR 60000
- 30 PRINT AT 10,9;"GREAT GURIANOS"
- 40 PRINT AT 12,11;FLASH 1;"START TAPE"
- 50 PRINT AT 21,5;INK 5;"HACKED BY TONY AND DAVE"
- 60 LOAD""CODE
- 70 POKE 65225,60: POKE 65226,254
- 80 POKE 64932,0: POKE 64942,0: POKE 64959,0
- 90 POKE 64961,0: POKE 64963,0
- 100 FOR N=65084 TO 65115: READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
- 110 DATA 33,84,254,17,0,64,1,8
- 120 DATA 0,237,176,62,0,50,8,91
- 130 DATA 62,64,50,9,91,195,0,91
- 140 DATA 62,0,50,146,136,195,0,128
- 150 RANDOMIZE USR 64750

### AIRWOLF II

- 1 REM MULTIFACE ONE OWNERS CAN POKE 53471,0
- 10 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7: BRIGHT 1: CLS
- 20 CLEAR 60000
- 30 PRINT AT 10,11;"AIRWOLF II"
- 40 PRINT AT 12,11;FLASH 1;"START TAPE"
- 50 PRINT AT 21,5;INK 5;"HACKED BY TONY AND DAVE"
- 60 LOAD""CODE 64752
- 70 POKE 65225,60: POKE 65226,254
- 80 POKE 64934,0: POKE 64944,0: POKE 64961,0
- 90 POKE 64963,0: POKE 64965,0
- 100 FOR N=65084 TO 65115: READ A: POKE N,A: NEXT N
- 110 DATA 33,84,254,17,0,64,1,8
- 120 DATA 0,237,176,62,0,50,8,91
- 130 DATA 62,64,50,9,91,195,0,91
- 140 DATA 62,0,50,223,208,195,7,193
- 150 RANDOMIZE USR 64752



## JON NORTH TIME

It's that time of the month again when everything in goes mad at CRASH Towers and Jon North sends in piles of POKES for me to sift through (as if the pressure of working for CRASH wasn't enough!). This month, after much deliberation, I've chosen his *Star Fox* and *Rockman* routines for your delectation. The *Star Fox* routine fixes things so's when you run out of fuel the game carries on. The *Rockman* routine proffers the profligate cheat infinite lives.

### STAR FOX

```

10 REM STAR FOX BY JON NORTH
20 CLEAR 25300: LET T=0
30 FOR F=32768 TO 32850
40 READ A: POKE F,A
50 LET T=T+(F-32758) * A: NEXT F
60 IF T=501844 THEN STOP
70 LOAD ""CODE: RUN USR 32837
80 DATA 50,21,255,122,254
90 DATA 46,192,62,50,50
100 DATA 84,205,33,21,255
110 DATA 34,85,205,62,195
120 DATA 50,58,91,33,32
130 DATA 128,43,59,91,195
140 DATA 0,91,50,107,92
150 DATA 33,49,128,17,204
160 DATA 91,1,11,0,237
170 DATA 176,195,61,91,175
180 DATA 50,36,140,195,31
190 DATA 231,128,223,181,209
200 DATA 177,144,141,139,151
210 DATA 206,198,199,200,62
220 DATA 205,50,84,205,33
230 DATA 0,128,34,85,205
240 DATA 195,0,205
    
```

### ROCKMAN

```

10 REM ROCKMAN BY JON NORTH
20 LET T=0
30 FOR F=32768 TO 32821
40 READ A: POKE F,A
50 LET T=T+(F-32758) * A: NEXT F
60 IF T=177518 THEN STOP
70 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
80 DATA 33,13,128,17,22
90 DATA 94,1,50,0,237
100 DATA 176,195,22,94,175
110 DATA 55,221,33,104,94
120 DATA 61,17,29,3,205
130 DATA 86,5,48,241,62
140 DATA 95,50,62,95,50
150 DATA 72,95,50,82,95
160 DATA 61,50,85,95,195
170 DATA 20,95,175,50,80
180 DATA 145,195,56,99
    
```

## THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS

Guess what? You always thought James Bond did it through being clever, macho and English to boot, but as *The Living Daylights* proves, he fiddles, or at least Domark do, because there's a cheat mode built into the game. Once it's loaded get as many points as possible, but if in trouble press the number 2 and it whips through the stages. Good eh. This comes courtesy of Craig Lee Taberner from Fitzwilliam. Thanks Craig.

## THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS (AGAIN)

So I lied, there's more Jon North than I said, because he's finished his exams (phew!) and got back to some serious hacking, with the result that this landed on my desk at the last moment (how it found the space

to touch down on something the size of a ping-pong bat I don't know).

If the 'level' cheat is used, play the game as normal and then press abort (3 and 4 together) to go to the next level.

```

10 REM THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS
11 REM BY JON NORTH
12 REM CRASH SEPTEMBER 87
20 CLEAR 32970: LET T=0
30 FOR F=65280 TO 65320
40 READ A: POKE F,A
50 LET T=T+(F-65270) * A: NEXT F
60 IF T=143617 THEN STOP
70 INPUT "LIVES? Y/N"; A$
80 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 65281,0
90 INPUT "LEVELS? Y/N"; A$
100 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 65286,2
110 RANDOMIZE USR 65293
120 DATA 62,53,50,4,152
130 DATA 62,1,50,8,153
140 DATA 195,0,145,221,33
150 DATA 203,128,17,124,1
160 DATA 62,255,55,205,86
170 DATA 5,48,241,62,128
180 DATA 50,232,128,62,255
190 DATA 50,101,129,195,216
200 DATA 128
    
```

## ATTENTION ALL MULTIFACE ONE USERS!

Owners of this little gadget are probably averse to typing in long POKE routines. The easy way to convert normal routines to the Multiface is quite simple, as Tom Price from Exmouth, Devon explains:

If the program has a long data statement at the end, look near the end of the statement for a 175 followed by a 50. The two numbers after it are the POKE. For example, look at *Ghost Hunters* (page 53 in the July CRASH, Issue 42) - DATA 175,50,214,216 - these are the POKES. To get the actual POKE number type second number \* 256 + first number. So here you'd use 216 \* 256 + 214, which is 55510, so POKE 55510,0.

Sometimes there are several pokes to be found this way, as in *Army Moves* (same issue, page 57, starting on line 1190) ...

DATA ... 183,190,175,50,94,209,50,181,190,  
221,33,221,33,221,34,99,254,50,101,254 ...

So the pokes work out at: POKE 53598,0: POKE 48821,0: POKE 65125,0  
Easy! (But it doesn't apply every time ...)

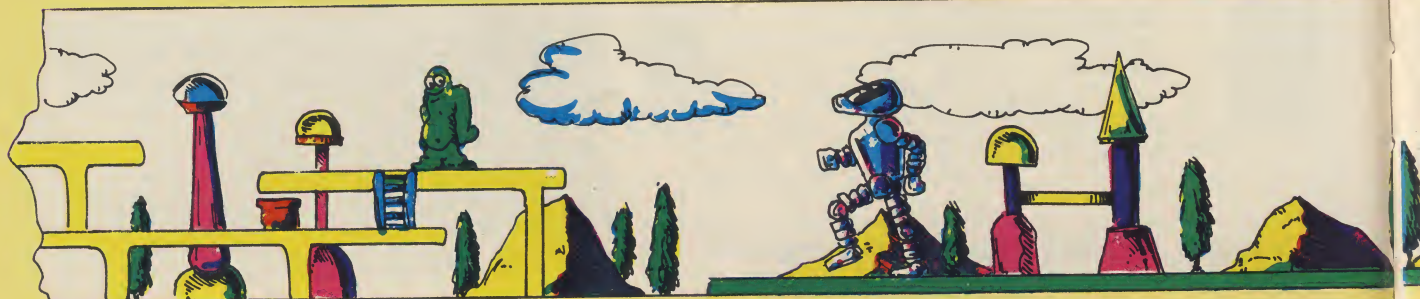
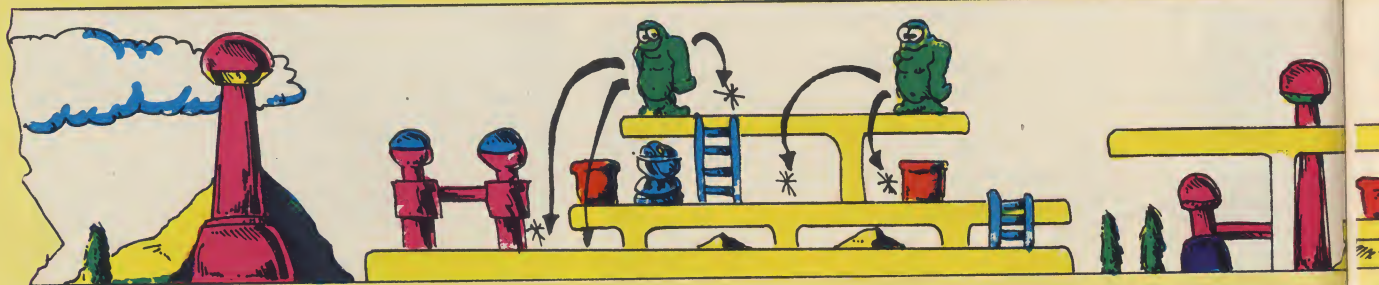
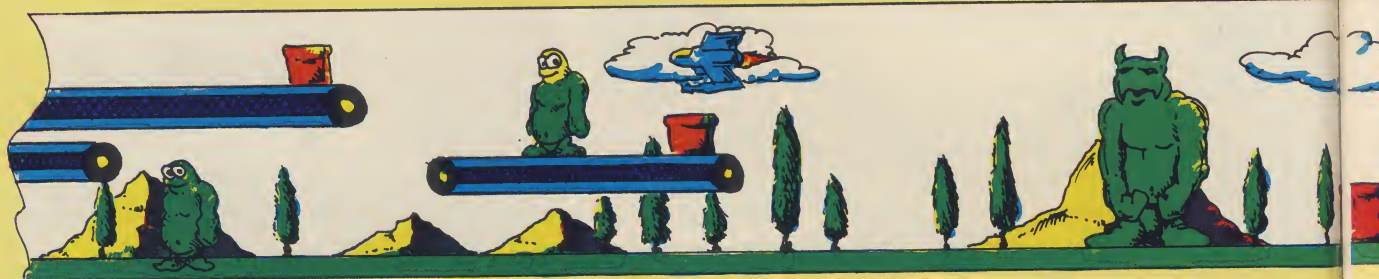
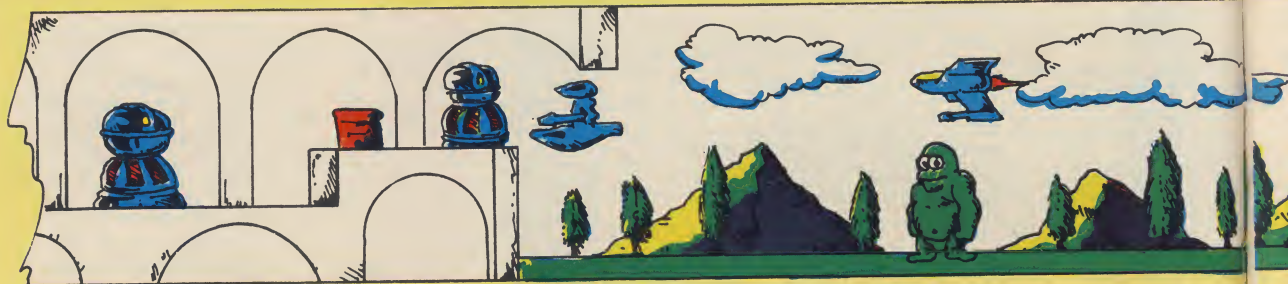
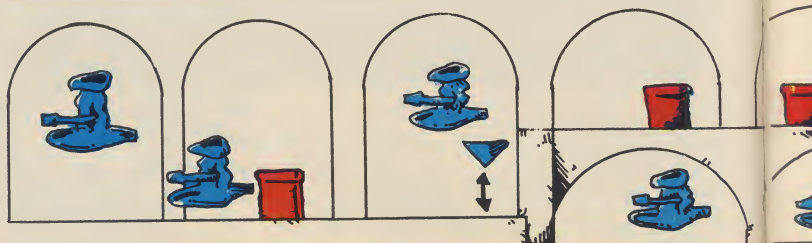
Here are some POKES for Multiface One owners who don't like typing massive listings (laziness is the leisure of the damned - granny again). They're from Colin Glaister of Warrington and Jay Salmon of Immingham.

WONDER BOY 48/128: POKE 52974,0  
CATCH 23: POKE 46813,0 - Infinite gun cartridges  
: POKE 61635,0 - Infinite bombs  
REBEL: POKE 49958,0 - Invulnerability  
: POKE 51139,0 - No life loss on laser miss  
: POKE 49239,0: POKE 49249,0 - Infinite time  
STORMBRINGER (48): POKE 40161,0  
: POKE 38865,0  
: POKE 46702,0  
STORMBRINGER (128): POKE 28208,0  
: POKE 29296,0  
: POKE 29364,0  
: POKE 36469,0  
STAR GLIDER: POKE 54421,0 - Infinite missiles  
: POKE 54450,0 - Missile time  
JACK THE NIPPER: POKE 44278,58: POKE 44285,58 - Invincibility



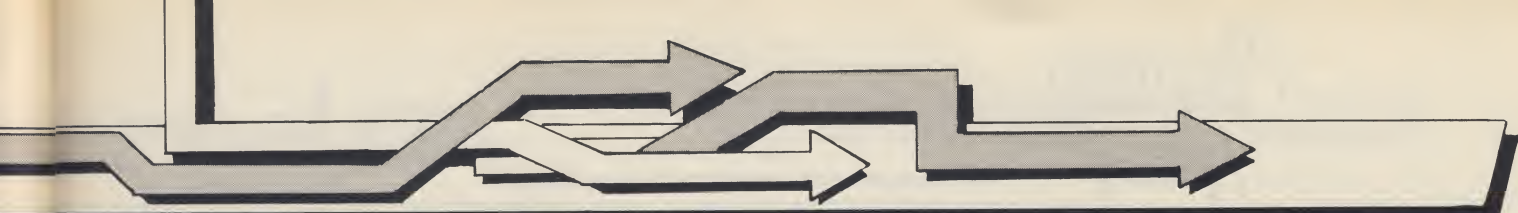
# GAME OVER

THE MAP.



Game Over  
completed by





Exolon Level One map compiled by MARK HANNAN

## GAME OVER

The Dinamic newie from Imagine may be giving some people a few problems (and if it isn't, what makes you so clever?), so here are tips from one S Sheppard of Leconfield (somewhere near Hull), which may be of use. And then there's also the map of level one from Mark Hannan.

On the first part, when shooting open a barrel always try and get in front of it and shoot back. This way if a bomb comes out you don't have to jump it, you can just walk off the screen.

Grenades aren't much use, so try and save them for screens 11 and 19 where the hazards are

greater, such as the Giant Orko and the three giant robots. The best tip for these screens is to stay right back at the screen entrance and crouch down. Shoot continuously, and when the bullets aren't coming so fast, leap on the spot and lob a grenade whilst up in the air. To avoid the bullets it is useful (especially on the screen with the three robots) to duck down whilst shooting.

For the second part one useful tip is the location of the POW screen, which is found by going down the first lift and continuing right along the first platform.

To get past the eye at the very top of the prison you must repeatedly shoot the top statue (its eyes will light up) until you obtain a shield. Also duck down when shooting robots as their bullets are at mid-height.

If there's a Multiface One kicking around you may like to stick in the Spectrum and enter these codes for *Game Over* from Marcus and Damian Conway of Smithills, Bolton - there again, you may not . . .

Level One	Level Two
39333,0 infinite lives	38691,0 infinite lives
39273,201 infinite power	38631,201 infinite power
32416,0 infinite grenades	32378,0 infinite grenades

## EXOLON

At last! The long awaited *Exolon* POKes to take some of the pain out of Hewson's fantastic new game. Craig Wilkinson from Che-

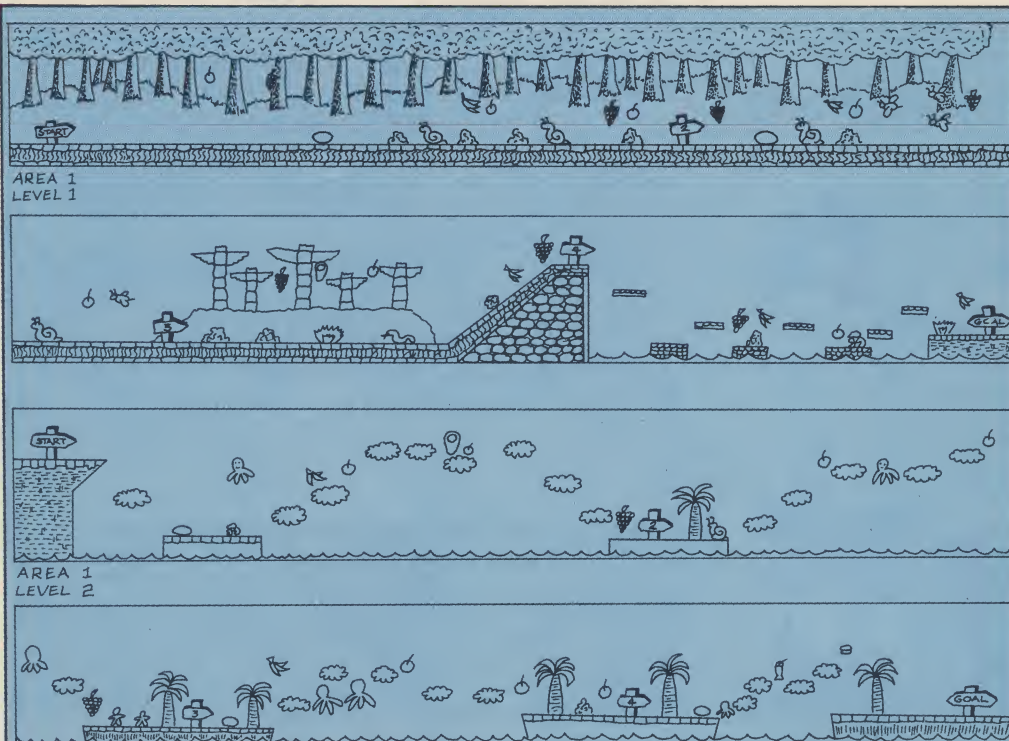
shire is responsible for the hack, which came in on a tape - isn't modern technology wonderful?

```

10 REM EXOLON CRASH SEPT 87
20 REM BY WICKED WILLY
30 CLEAR 25499: PRINT AT 11,2;"PLAY EXOLON TAPE FROM START": INK 7: LOAD"EXOLON"CODE
40 LET A=25500
50 READ B: IF B<>999 THEN POKE A,B: LET A=A+1: GOTO 50
60 RANDOMIZE USR 25500
90 REM DON'T DELETE LINES 100 OR 140
100 DATA
33,0,252,17,80,195,1,19,0,237,176,62,20
1,50,99,195,205,8,0,195,33,
184,99,34,111,254,195,19,252
110 DATA
62,0,50,29,157,33,0,0,34,125,104,34,77,1
12: REM INFINITE LIVES
120 DATA 62,0,50,110,131: REM INFINITE BULLETS
130 DATA 62,0,50,80,146: REM INFINITE GRENADES
140 DATA 195,96,109,999
  
```

For Multiface One owners: Infinite lives: POKE 40221,0:POKE 26749,0:POKE 26750,0:POKE 28749,0:POKE 28750,0  
 Infinite bullets: POKE 33646,0  
 Infinite rockets: POKE 37456,0





## WONDER BOY MAP

That downright dirty and evil king still has your heart-throb, Tina, so David Loughton and Anthony Plant have mapped the game to make your quest a mite easier.

## SCEPTRE OF BAGDAD

And now, after making you wait for simply ages, here's what you've all been waiting for, the final part of the *Sceptre Of Bagdad* solution from Robert Gorst. If you're not a regular **CRASH** reader (and how come, seeing as it's illegal not to be?) the first part was printed in Issue 44 (September, which is last month – so it wasn't that, long to wait, now was it?).

You should by now have a MIRROR and a FISH HELMET. Go back to where you left the SHARPENED TRUNK, pick it up and leave behind the FISH HELMET. Now go to the room which is one left from the starting room and enter the door. Slide down the banister, go left, left again, walk to the left and get rid of the Medusa, and then go left again to kill Cyclops. Go all the way back to the room to the left of the start and follow these steps to make a BOW, QUIVER and LAMP with the STRING:

1. **The BOW:** Take the WHIP from the balcony, one room right from the start. Then take this to the shops, and the furthest room on the right contains a BULL and WAGON. Jump up to the wheel's spokes on the WAGON and you should have a full AXLE. Go to the oyster room, turn right and replace the

axles of the drawbridge. Grab the SLIPPERS where you left them and walk across the drawbridge. Walk right to the hot coals, walk over these and keep going until you get to an island. Take the BOW but don't drop the SLIPPERS. Walk back over the coals and drop the BOW in a place where you can remember it.

2. **The STRING:** First get the INSECT NET from the same floor as the opening wardrobe and next to the blue and yellow bean bag(?), take the NET to the BEE which came from the HIVE and it should go. Your NET is now full. Go to the first room left of the starting room and take the SWORD, without dropping the NET. Go through the door, slide down, go right, go towards the STRING and jump at it to collect it. Leave the STRING somewhere safe.
3. **The QUIVER:** This is easier. Just go to the empty statue pedestal, jump to the top of it, fall down and take the QUIVER, leaving it somewhere safe.
4. **The LAMP:** Take the WHISK from the room with the BEACHBALLS, three rooms away left of the start. Go to the green platform between the two trees, (past the wardrobe room, down the stairs and right). Use the DOOR KEY, go down the hole, and there should be a

wizard awaiting you, flailing his arms about!

\* Now his smoke has gone, walk towards the lamp and leave it somewhere safe. Now this is the order you should collect them: Pick up the BOW, then the STRING, drop the STRING, pick up the QUIVER, drop the QUIVER and pick up the LAMP. Now go to the room first left from the start, go through the door, down the banister, left, left, and left again until you get to a SEE-SAW (ahh!).

Walk to the end of the SEE-SAW then he will aim his BOW and ARROW at the STRING, the BOULDER hanging from the STRING will now drop onto the other side of the SEE-SAW and catapult you into the Sceptre room. The SCEPTRE is on a pedestal and you must take it and get teleported by the clouds. If you don't get the SCEPTRE and teleport then repeat the process again, starting from the point marked \*.

If you get the SCEPTRE, just keep going right until you have reached the balcony, walk to the edge and you have completed the game with 100%.

Handy tip: if you can try and get someone to read out the solution while you play the game, it's a big help, but if not, read it on to a tape and play it back. But you'd already thought of that, hadn't you!

## SATCOM

Dial the number given on the inlay (515-626160 same each game), you will get through to a company called GLOBAL ATMOSPHERICS UK. Press Space to return to control, select ANALYSIS – select DATA work out code.

Dial GLOBAL – enter code. Select No. 2 on menu – press Space, select No. 1 on menu – press Space, a third option appears, select No. 3 on menu. Press Space to return to control, select ANALYSIS – select DATA work out code.

Dial GLOBAL, work your way back to second code. A telephone list will be displayed, note down the Numbers.

There's no point in phoning NASA yet because SATCOM cannot work out the code. It is however, located at CREATIVE ELECTRONICS LTD (CEL).

If you dial CON you will indeed be CONned, since all get is a system overload.

Dial TECH TRANSMITTERS LTD (TTL). Press Space to return to control, select ANALYSIS – select DATA, work out code. Dial TTL – enter code, note down which satellite has had extra equipment fitted. Press Space to return to control.

Dial LION, press Space to return to control, select ANALYSIS – select DATA, work out code.

Dial LION – enter code. Note down the load code No. for the AD COUNT DOWN software, press Space to return to control.

Dial CAMEO LASER REFRACTORS (CLR) Note down the colour order of the top four colour bars, ie (red-purple-green-blue), press Space to return to control.

Dial CREATIVE ELECTRONICS LTD (CEL). Press Space to return to control. Select ANALYSIS – select DATA, work out code.

Answer (N) then (Y). Note down the NASA ident code and reverse it. Press Space.

Dial NASA. Enter reversed code, select correct satellite (you noted it down) enter AD COUNT DOWN code (you noted it down), wait for each number to be logged, press Space, press Space again to return to control. Select ANALYSIS – select DATA, work out code.

Dial NASA and repeat this procedure on the other two codes.

After you enter the third code (Auto Destruct) and provided you are trying to destroy the correct satellite and the correct software is loaded (AD COUNT DOWN), then you will arrive at the orbital VDU display.

You must now arrange the coloured boxes in the order of the coloured bars in the CLR advert. The way to do this is to place the last colour first and then the second colour, etc.

And that's it, you've earned a medal!



## LLOYD'S 'OOOPS I'M INCREDIBLY SORRY' CORNER

Whoops! If something goes wrong blame the typesetting machine – I usually do. A few things went wrong in the August CRASH (Issue 43) too late to be corrected. Firstly . . .

### FUTURE KNIGHT EDITOR

You have to press the **EDIT F** and **K** keys, not the **S** and **K** keys as I said before. Also, if you press the **C** key you can redefine the graphics and **X** to get back to the proper place. Prodding the **D** key allows you to move back a graphic.

And secondly . . .

### HEAD OVER HEELS

. . . in which there were a few incorrect lines. Rather than just print those, here's the whole listing again – correctly this time . . .

```

1 CLEAR 64500
2 LET T=0:LET W=1
5 FOR F=32000 TO 32170
10 READ A:POKE F,A
15 LET T=T+A * W:LET W=W+1
20 NEXT F
25 IF T<>1764297 THEN PRINT "DATA
  ERROR": STOP
30 PRINT AT 10,1;"START HEAD OVER
  HEELS TAPE"
50 RANDOMIZE USR 32000
100 DATA 221,33,203,92,17,234
110 DATA 6,62,255,55,205,86,5
120 DATA 48,241,243,237,94,33
130 DATA 44,125,229,33,173,98
140 DATA 229,51,51,17,163,252
150 DATA 1,22,3,33,253,94,62
160 DATA 202,237,79,195,173,98
170 DATA 33,70,125,229,33,199
180 DATA 252,229,51,51,17,209
190 DATA 253,1,232,2,33,209,252
200 DATA 62,196,237,79,195,199
210 DATA 252,33,209,17,209
220 DATA 138,1,92,0,237,176,33
230 DATA 228,138,34,233,138,34
240 DATA 237,138,33,218,138,34
250 DATA 245,138,33,255,138,34
260 DATA 9,139,62,195,50,29,139
270 DATA 33,116,125,34,30,139
280 DATA 195,209,138,175,50
290 DATA 166,255,62,195,50,99
300 DATA 255,33,250,250,34,100
310 DATA 255,33,145,125,17,250
320 DATA 250,1,50,0,237,176,195
330 DATA 55,255,33,0,0,34,113
340 DATA 163,33,34,25,34,115
350 DATA 163,62,33,50,120,163
360 DATA 50,123,163,49,255,255
370 DATA 195,48,112
  
```

And thirdly . . . the POKes for *Monty On The Run* had one line missing. Line 30 should read **LOAD""CODE**. It must be my eyesight's getting bad, because I could have sworn it was right on John Bramley's letter. Still, thanks to **Andrew Swain** for pointing that one out, and I'm sorry for any inconvenience it may have caused (but cheats never prosper, my old granny told me).

## A FEW CHEAT MODES

A being authentically called Thistle from Scotland sent in some really useful cheat modes and codes for brand new games. And F R Stewart finished off the list with some cheats for *Cobra* and *Jack The Nipper*.

**EXOLON** Go to redefine keys mode and then type **ZOBRA** for infinite lives.

**ROAD RUNNER** While in the options screen, and during the scrolling message, press **RTHB** together for infinite lives, and **WVKLO** to see the end sequence.

**MOUNTIE MICK'S DEATHRIDE** Once the game has started, press **K** once to become invulnerable to bullets.

**COBRA** Press the Space bar and **Z** or **X**, and it slows everything down.

**JACK THE NIPPER** Go to the police station with the horn and toot it at the safe. Your naughtiness will rise.

## HEAD OVER HEELS

Following the POKes I printed two months ago, the intrepid duo now have a cheat to help them in their quest. It comes courtesy of Scott Dickson from bonny Scotland.

1) Guide Head right, through the door until he comes up against the wall. (swap) Turn Heels to face the wall. Now switch back to Head and keep the fire button pressed. When Head jumps to his full height, repeatedly tap the swap key and Head jumps over the wall. If it doesn't work first time, let go of all the buttons and try again (but you must start with Head jumping).

2) 'What's the use of that,' I hear you cry. Well for a start it saves time and effort on the 'bag' screen. And by the way, to get Head and Heels back over the wall, put Heels on top of Head (right against the wall), keep the fire button pressed and repeatedly tap the swap key. This gets Heels over the wall, then to get Head over the wall repeat stage one.

## ZYNAPS

To kick off with here's a POKe routine for Hewson's July shoot-'em-up *Smash*. It comes from a person with the discreet name of Mel the Cheat. You can chose invincibility and 1-255 lives.

```

10 REM ZYNAPS POKE CRASH OCT 87
20 REM BY MEL THE CHEAT
30 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7
40 CLEAR 32767
50 LET I=62
60 INPUT "HOW MANY LIVES (1-255)?";N
70 INPUT "INVINCIBLE (Y/N)?";A$
80 IF A$="Y" THEN LET I=201
90 PRINT AT 11,0;"START ZYNAPS TAPE
  FROM START"
100 LOAD""CODE
110 POKE 64531,214
130 RANDOMIZE USR 64512
140 POKE 65115,15
150 FOR I=23311 TO 23323
160 READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
170 DATA 62,N,50,208,175
180 DATA 62,1,50,95,155
190 DATA 195,0,128
200 RANDOMIZE USR 65082
  
```

Or alternatively, if you have a **Multiface One**, Marcus & Damian Conway have discovered these POKes for you. **POKE 45424,0: POKE 45425,0: POKE 45426,0** which gives you infinite lives; and **POKE 39775,201** which provides invincibility.

Well, that's the fun over for another month. Thanks for all your contributions, but please stop all the letters with SAEs because I can't reply to them. If you're desperate to get tips on older games, I'm afraid you'll just have to get back numbers from the appropriate division of Newsfield Empires Inc (talk to Aunt Aggie, aka Carol Kinsey, aka she who lives in the basement). Don't forget to send all your tips and POKes to the usual address, which is **LLOYD MANGRAM'S PLAYING TIPS, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**. As for me (seeing as how it's now the small hours), I'm off for a well-earned cup of tea.



Please note: the supplement is not held by its own staples. Carefully lever up the two staples holding the entire issue, and lift out the 24 pages. You can then press the staples together again to keep the magazine intact. The supplement pages will eventually be held together by the binder. The CRASH History will be numbered continuously from page 1 to 96, not as part of the magazines.



# CRASH



MICRO GAMES ACTION

FEBRUARY 1988  
No. 1

75p

THE MONTHLY  
SPECTRUM  
SOFTWARE  
REVIEW

THE BIGGEST  
SPECTRUM  
SOFTWARE  
MAGAZINE...

OVER 400  
GAMES  
REVIEWED

TOP 20 PHONE-IN  
THE CRASH HOTLINE

JOYSTICKS  
BOON OR A PAIN?  
& WHICH ONE TO BUY?

BEWARE THE  
WRATH OF MAGRA!

SHOOT EM UP!

Invaders Galaxians - we  
compare some versions

ARCADE ADVENTURE STRATEGY  
SIMULATION EDUCATION UTILITIES

Become a Reviewer for CRASH!  
AND WIN EXCITING SOFTWARE  
in our Reviewers Competition!  
ENTER THE MONTHLY  
CRASH QUIZ!!!  
PRIZES TO BE  
WON



## February 1984 Issue No. 1

Released on  
January 13th

The 'Chairman', as he's now known, hangs in the Newsfield boardroom. This first cover of CRASH was not based on any particular game, but took its inspiration from the chrome-teethed, machine-oil-dripping alien from the film *Alien*. It's really a simple gag – an alien playing *Space Invaders*, the screen reflected in his eyes. The object was to provide a striking and ferocious image to leap off the news shelves, and to declare to the world that CRASH was very different to existing computer magazines with their reliance on photographed hardware.

Work started on the first issue of CRASH well before Christmas 1983. The editorial team, which was to remain unchanged for three months, consisted of Roger Kean, Oliver Frey, Lloyd Mangram and Matthew Uffindell, a 17-year-old who had been buying software from Crash Micro Games Action mail order. As he lived nearby, he popped in to purchase games and somehow never quite left. Many of CRASH's early reviewers were recruited in this fashion. Matthew now works in Newsfield's art department as a senior film planner – one of the people who put the images on film, ready for the printers.

At the 1983 PCW Show, held at the Barbican that year, Roger Kean and CRASH financial director Franco Frey roved around the stands trying to convince software houses that a really new magazine was about to arrive. Interest was generally luke warm, but nevertheless, by mid-December when the issue had to be ready, 27 pages of advertising had been sold – enough to provide CRASH with the funds to print!

The original concept behind CRASH had been to provide a low-key, low-cost magazine, mostly in monochrome, to attract the numerous software houses who couldn't afford the advertising rates of the existing glossies, so several of the first issues were printed on cheap newsprint with a heavier colour section wrapped around. As it turned out, most advertisers opted for colour advertisements and so gradually CRASH became as glossy (and as expensive to advertise in) as the rest. It was while Roger was driving to Milton Keynes to watch the first colour coming off the press that he was stopped by the police for speeding – at 3.30 in the morning. On explaining to the officers that he was rushing to a birth, he was let off with a caution. He's never broken a speed limit since . . .

Issue One had lots to offer, including an amazing 60 reviews, the first time ever so much space had been devoted to Spectrum games. Among them were notables like *Zaxxon* from Starzone, a bunch of youngsters who later got into a legal wrangle with US Gold when the official version of *Zaxxon* was released, *Bugaboo (The Flea)* from Quicksilver, which got 92% and would have been a Smash had there been Smashes in those days, and of course the Game of the Month, Micromega's *3-D Deathchase* – still a great thrill to play. Programming innovations were still largely a thing of the future, but Sandy White's *Ant Attack* (Quicksilver) raised some eyebrows, although I remember Matthew and I feeling that it lacked something in the gameplay.

Then there was the fabled Living Guide, which was to run for the first four issues before it became too unwieldy to cope with. It listed every game you could lay your hands on under classified headings like 'Platformers', 'Maze Games' and so on. Matthew and another young reviewer, Chris Passey, provided a comparison of *Invader/Galaxian* games in *Run It Again*, Franco reviewed and compared joystick interfaces, we launched the first ever readers' hotline chart, and offered readers the chance to become a CRASH reviewer in a competition. Interestingly, one of its runners-up was a young man by the name of John Minson, but more of him much later . . .

We also profiled Rabbit Software, Blaby Games and Carnell, who were finishing their much-heralded *Wrath of Magra*. And to round off, I did my first ever look back at the software year. The weakest spot in that first CRASH (and for several issues) was the lack of a proper adventure reviewer. Buried deep in the Living Guide were mini reviews of *Star Trek* and *Velnor's Lair*, two games from a tiny outfit called Neptune, operated by one Derek Brewster . . .





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

MARCH 1984  
No. 2

75p

THE MONTHLY  
SPECTRUM  
SOFTWARE  
REVIEW

THE BIGGEST  
SPECTRUM  
SOFTWARE  
MAGAZINE...

**OVER 400  
GAMES  
REVIEWED**

**BRITAIN'S FIRST  
PHONE-IN  
TOP SOFT CHART**

**REACH FOR THE  
STAR ZONE**

Profile on STARZONE &  
Hewson programmer STEVE TURNER

**ROLL OUT THE  
BARREL**

Kong games - we compare versions

**CLIP ON - SPEAK OUT**

Currah  $\mu$ Speech  
& cursor joysticks

PLUS; A TRIP TO IMAGINÉ; NEWS; & MUCH MORE

ARCADE ADVENTURE STRATEGY  
SIMULATION EDUCATION UTILITIES



**SPECTRUM**  
100 to go! WIN A COPY OF  
DOOMSDAY CASTLE  
& PRIZES TO WIN IN THE  
CRASH QUIZ

OLIVER  
TAYLOR



## March 1984 Issue No. 2

Released on  
February 16th

Coming from a film-making background, Oliver Frey loves powerful images and classic Thirties and Forties monochrome movies, interests never better reflected than in the second CRASH cover. It celebrated the proliferation of Donkey Kong clones on the Spectrum at the time, and related to the Run It Again article in the issue comparing Mario's many attempts to rescue his girl from the overgrown ape's clutches. Note Kong's cavalier treatment of the Spectrum itself – Oliver is to use the computer repeatedly in cover illustrations as a player in the drama, quite revolutionary in 1984.

It was a bit of a conceit to state on the cover 'Over 400 Games Reviewed' (345 were in the Living Guide), but the gung-ho exclamation ideally indicates the small CRASH team's euphoria at public reaction to Issue One – we wanted everyone to know that we were the biggest and the best!

Attitudes within the trade were equally invigorating; several specialist shops acclaimed CRASH as the long-awaited Spectrum Bible. Even *Computer & Video Games* sent us a congratulations card, but I fear they saw us as no competition, merely a local fanzine to be encouraged; few people at the time realised that as many as 50,000 copies of Issue One sold nationally. It was a heady figure and one not to be repeated for quite some time.

February's weather, however, brought CRASH down to earth. The schedule ran late. Oliver worked for 30 hours nonstop to complete Terminal Man, while John Edwards, newly-recruited advertisement manager, stood anxiously by, waiting to take the layout boards down to the London printer who wanted to start at 9.30am. John had to catch the 6am train from Birmingham New Street. At 4am on a freezing winter morning Oliver finished, but Roger Kean (who was still working on the Living Guide) did not.

At 5am, the boards still four pages incomplete, Roger drove John the 40 miles to Birmingham through a heavy snow storm. After ten minutes they were stuck on a steep hill outside Ludlow. Turning back to try another route, they came across a skidded lorry with its nose in a ditch. The unfortunate driver turned out to be a local newstrade wholesaler, delivering magazines to Ludlow. Seeing the CRASH boards, as they gave him a lift back into town, the driver exclaimed excitedly. He owned a Spectrum and had loved the first issue. So there they were, John frustrated, Roger struggling with the terrible conditions, and a mad lorry driver who wanted nothing more than to talk about high scores on *Lunar Jetman*!

They got through in the end, the printer did the job in time, and Issue Two did arrive. To many people's horror, there were *five* Games Of The Month ('confusing to have so many,' wrote one reader), and in their very different ways they indicated that Spectrum games were improving rapidly and almost beyond belief. Top was Ultimate's classic *Atic Atac*, but *Android 2* showed Costa Panayi flexing his muscles for Vortex with the best 3-D effects yet seen. Like the first two, *Krakatoa* (Abbex) offered large graphics which were a novelty in early 84, combined with complex gameplay and a wicked sense of humour (also a rare commodity). *Scuba Dive* (Durell) also boasted large and effectively fishy graphics with interestingly different game objectives, while Microsphere's *Wheelie* was to prove one of the most addictive games of the year.

We also ran our first 'real' competition, for Fantasy, promoting *Doomsday Castle*. It was so successful that it set the pattern for an increasing number of competitions thereafter.

Because of their oddly unergonomic arrangement, games only offering the cursors for control lost percentage points badly in those days! But we praised small-company inventiveness in an article examining some joysticks which were actually attached to the Spectrum to physically manipulate the cursed cursors. Franco had a good listen to Currah's ahead-of-its-time speech unit, and Hewson's Steve Turner was interviewed as well as the four lads from Starzone.

I also had quite a few letters to print and answer – among them was a complaint that at five pounds, the price of software was far too high. Things never change . . .





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

APRIL 1984

75p



previews

## JET SET WILLY

SOFTWARE PROJECTS

## CODE NAME

**MAT**  
MICROMEGA

## SINCLAIR TALKS TO CRASH

## ARCADE APOCALYPSE

'MISSILE COMMAND' Comparison

## HOLMES & HURG

Full review of the fabulous H.U.R.G.  
from MELBOURNE HOUSE

**SPECTRUM**  
MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW  
COLLECTOR'S ITEM  
**FREE IMAGINE  
POSTER**  
100 COPIES OF  
'ANDROID 2'  
TO WIN!



**April 1984**  
**Issue No. 3**

**Released on**  
**March 22nd**

*This cover first demonstrated Oliver Frey's ability to combine several disparate elements into one picture. It related to an article on Melbourne House and Australian Philip Mitchell, who programmed The Hobbit and was working on the very delayed Sherlock Holmes. Melbourne's H.U.R.G. (High Level User-Friendly Real Time Games Designer) had nothing to do with Philip, but was reviewed in the issue, so Oliver melded the two ideas by having Sherlock peer through his magnifying glass in which is reflected (backwards) a clue to H.U.R.G.*

With monthly pressures getting tough, we all welcomed the arrival in Ludlow of David Western, a one-time colleague of Roger Kean. David lent a valued hand to the artwork layout, allowing Roger to concentrate more on the writing and planning. The stress is plainly seen in the cover, which had no issue number, and on the contents page, where Roger happily but erroneously stated it was Issue Four! David, now Newsfield's Production Controller, was (and still is) an excellent photographer, and the marked improvement in our screen shots was noted.

Taking pictures from a monitor is no simple matter, and all CRASH had at the time was a rented 14-inch telly! I can remember getting in the engineer to look at it because all the colour was being pulled into one corner leaving the rest black-and-white. The bemused man took it away and brought another, shaking his head, saying only a strong magnet could produce such an effect. I refrained from telling him that David had been waving his very powerful light meter over the screen – it contained a massive magnetic field!

Further improvements in picture quality had to wait until the wonderful Microvitec Cub monitor arrived for review, but with David's ministrations, people everywhere began praising our colour screen shots, at least (they appear so fuzzy now).

CRASH was, unwittingly, about to unleash a media war. We regarded ourselves as specialist enthusiasts, and so news of any program in progress excited us, and we wanted to convey that feeling to the readers. We were also very chatty with software houses, so it came as no surprise that we were easily able to get very advanced screen shots of Matthew Smith's unfinished *Jet Set Willy*, possibly the most eagerly awaited game of all time. As a result, CRASH was the first to print pictures, despite plenty of interest in the project from other magazines.

On top of that, through close and friendly relations with Micromega, we were also the first to spot the potential of *Code Name Mat* by Derek Brewster. When it was first shown to us, it had no name, and the joke became current that Mat referred to Matthew Uffindell, the CRASH reviewer who was the first player in the country to get his hands on it – and who knows, it may be true!

All this frenzied previewing activity put CRASH markedly ahead of the other magazines at the time, but they soon started fighting back and the scrabble for advance information was on in earnest. The trick, however, was not only to be first with words and pictures, but also to spot the real winners. We weren't always right . . .

Issue Three showed another improvement – the paper. The printer was changed and CRASH went fully glossy. Games Of The Month were given a logo on the review page instead of being bunched up at the start, the first of these being *Blue Thunder* (Richard Wilcox, soon to be absorbed by his family into Elite Systems), *Cavern Fighter* from Bug-Byte, and *Night Gunner* by Digital Integration. Although Matthew, Roger and I liked *Blue Thunder*, there was an adverse reaction from some readers, but everyone seemed agreed that the graphically uninspiring *Cavern Fighter* was a damned good 'Scramble' game.

Hardware novelty object was Stack's Light Rifle, which caused battles between Matthew and Chris Passey to use it. It was fun but hardly earthshatteringly good, and it's amusing now to see the games consoles bringing the idea back – with somewhat more accurate results.

Oh, and we did the first ever CRASHtionnaire to find out how well readers thought the magazine was doing.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No4 MAY 1984  
75p

## ADVENTURE

### DRIPPING GOLD

Gilsoft's THE QUILL spawns monsters

Time to set off on our

### ADVENTURE TRAIL

### WALKING THE PLANK

Software and Piracy

### KEYBOARD REMBRANDTS

We look at some Draw Utilities

### SWEET TALKING

Is it catching?

**SPECTRUM**  
**MONTHLY SOFTWARE**  
**REVIEW**  
INCENTIVE'S MILLIONAIRE  
COMPETITION £1,000  
OF PRIZES TO  
WIN



## May 1984 Issue No. 4

Released on  
April 26th

Still relying principally on the dynamics of a large, powerful face for a cover image, Oliver turned his attention to the adventure market. He'd done many illustrations for books dealing with mystery and horror subjects, and since so many adventures featured evil wizards and sorcerers, the character on this cover sprang easily enough to mind. Discussion, however, revealed that Oliver was unhappy with the finished picture because it didn't seem to have any computer relevance. Roger suggested adding the 'what now' cursor to the eye and the visual gag was complete.

Reflecting the cover, and probably because he felt guilty at not covering adventure games as much as he should have done, Roger Kean spent many hours writing an adventure with Gilsoft's new machine code utility, *The Quill*. As I can testify, the result was quite unpublishable, but the time wasn't wasted because he managed to write a fulsome article on the use of *The Quill*, as well as reviewing several Gilsoft *Quilled* adventures.

This was a time when young hopeful programmers expected to get their games accepted for publishing for the simple reason that they had written them. To some professional programmers *The Quill* seemed a frightening idea, a means of making adventure-writing simple, so anyone could do it and take away their living. But *The Quill* was a tool, not a source of inspiration, and it proved that there can never be any substitute for imagination.

Still with adventures, Issue Four saw the modest beginning of Derek Brewster's Adventure Trail. For some weeks, Derek had been persuading Roger that CRASH desperately needed someone who understood the genre to write a proper column. Politically, appointing Derek to the chair was a good move, for he had a pedigree both with adventure and arcade games (his *Code Name Mat* was one of the CRASH Smashes, which made their first appearance in this issue too). There were a lot of points to be earned for the still-struggling magazine by having a notable like Derek write for it – and it was a nice one in the eye for the more established titles!

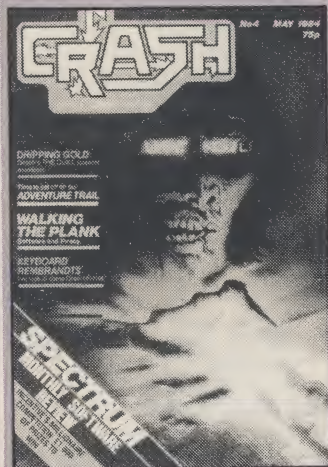
In addition to *Code Name Mat*, with its complexity of 3-D space gameplay, others in the new Smash breed included two from Software Projects, *Jet Set Willy* (about to cause havoc by being both immensely exciting to play and containing the famous 'Attic Bug' that stopped you from completing the game!) and the appealing but difficult *Tribble Trouble*. Steve Turner finally got his reward for long service with a Smash for Hewson's *3-D Lunattack*, and for further pushing forward the barriers of his major interest, realistic-perspective games.

It was also a time when large concerns not normally involved in computer games tried testing the water. One of the biggest, Thorn EMI, launched some games through its label, Creative Sparks, and *Orc Attack* became a Smash, not so much for its graphics, which were amusing, but for its fiendishly difficult gameplay. Creative Sparks was to have a roller-coaster existence, finally ending up as Creative Sparks Distribution, which recently went into receivership.

But one small, as yet unknown, software house made its first appearance in CRASH that month with a game we really liked, one largely ignored by other magazines. It was *Ad Astra* and the programmers had thought, perhaps, of calling themselves Gargoyle Games . . .

This was the issue where we revealed the CRASH Reviewers competition results. The blurb noted that the winner had won by a faint margin. One of the runners-up was a certain John Minson. To think, had the margin been a touch fainter he could have been writing for CRASH at a fraction of the exorbitant fee he now commands! Well, we all make mistakes. Looking at his entry, there's little to suggest that this man will one day turn into a voracious ligger of vituperative prose and metamorphose into the Hunter S Minson we all know and . . .

May's Living Guide dealt with board games, simulations, strategies and adventures. At the end it said 'Next Month: Arcade Games', but the Guide had become too huge to fit in, and too much effort for the overworked team – it was destined never to return.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No 5 JUNE 1984 75p

THE  
ONE  
BIG  
SPECTRUM  
SOFTWARE  
MAG

GAMES TIPS  
HELPLINE  
CRASHLINE  
ADVENTURES  
UTILITIES

COMPETITION  
COSMOS:

BRILL  
PRIZES  
GALORE!!

PSS  
MICROMANIA

CRASH QUIZ  
ULTIMATE  
MELBOURNE HOUSE

STACK  
CDS

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
HOW TO WIN JET SET WILLY!  
CRASH COURSE  
A look at some Learning  
Software



**June 1984  
Issue No. 5**

**Released on  
May 24th**

*Having had his fill of page-compressed faces of alien monsters, giant apes, famous detectives and evil warlocks, Oliver broke out with this space action cover. No particular game was in mind apart from the defender/scramble concept, but the idea for a canyon constructed of game cassettes was Roger Kean's. It was a typical situation in the early days for Oliver to think up an idea, for Roger, David or Matthew to rework it as a visual gag, which Oliver would then implement so interestingly. And this picture long remained a favourite with readers.*

The cover slogan, *The ONE BIG Spectrum Software MAG*, wasn't merely bombast, it was actually an aggressive parody of *Big K's* logo. *Big K* was another example of a large corporation (IPC) testing the software waters, in this case with a magazine, but though it was a multiuser title, *Big K's* prelaunch blurb strode across preserves we at CRASH regarded as peculiarly our own at the time, namely being irreverent about software (though of course we also thought we were the only really serious ones – that's called having your cake *and* eating it).

When I look at the contents page of Issue Five, the thing that strikes me now is that of all the sections competitions was actually the biggest – seven DIYs – proving the point that we recognised their popularity. But one of those competitions stands out markedly, the *Atic Atac* map. Game maps were unheard of in publications in 1984 – it simply hadn't occurred to anyone that mapping a game was relevant, but there was no doubt that some games being produced were actually made up from maps in the programmers' minds. *Atic Atac* was one such, and certainly one where having a map before you helped playing it. There was also the fear that printing a game map might upset the software house, for games stayed upon the shop shelves far longer than they do today. It was definitely a feather in the CRASH cap to sign a competition deal with Ultimate, for the magically successful software house was traditionally uncommunicative with both public and press. Later, *C&VG* editor Tim Metcalf even complained good-naturedly to Roger Kean about the secret CRASH pipeline to Ultimate affection.

Maps were the latest thing; Issue Five saw the inaugural edition of the Playing Tips. My desk was expanded and I began regurgitating the erudite scribbles of readers who added helpful hints to their letters. Among those had been primitive *Atic Atac* maps, and one or two reasonable versions of *Jet Set Willy's* terrifying mansion. The best, by Kenneth Kyle from Notts, was avidly poured over by Roger Kean (who got A level geography at school). He spent an entire weekend checking it out against the game, using a handy infinite lives cheat supplied by an embryonic hacker, and drawing up his own map which then appeared in the issue, thanking Kenneth for his inspiring version.

It started a trend; from this point on CRASH would have to have maps whenever possible, and before long every other computer mag dealing with games would follow suit. Otherwise the Playing Tips seem pretty tame now, along the, 'from levels 17-24 of *Chuckie Egg*, both the robot hens and the yellow hen are after you. This increases the excitement and makes it much harder' line. Thrilling.

This June issue was the real launch of Beyond, a powerful new software house put together by EMAP, publishers of *C&VG* and *Sinclair User*. Beyond's try-out game, *Space Station Zebra*, had proved a dud, but *Psytron* was a Smash, largely because of the complex, interlinked game elements and its use of crosshatched graphics. The technique wasn't exactly new, but this was the first time monochromatic line drawings had been used so extensively on a plain-coloured background, providing a tremendously detailed effect.

Meanwhile, Derek's new Adventure Trail had also found a Smash in Hewson's *Fantasia Diamond*. But at *Psytron's* release, Beyond hinted that a revolutionary new adventure game, *Lords Of Midnight*, was almost ready . . .





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No 6 July 1984 75p

**3D**  
**OR NOT...**  
**3D**

CRASH takes an  
in-depth look at  
perspective in games

**SABRE  
WOLF**  
ON SCREEN!



DEREK BREWSTER'S  
**ADVENTURE TRAIL SNOWBALLS!**  
**2-PART PULL-OUT MAP OF**  
**ATIC ATAC**

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
Win a copy of C.D.S. Pool  
and Ad Astra!



**July 1984**  
**Issue No. 6**

**Released on**  
**June 28th**

*This cover is unique, for to date it is the only one that is actually a photograph, albeit one of Oliver's artwork. Relating to an article about 3-D games, the picture's theme was taken from the newly released film Raiders Of The Lost Ark. 'Indie' is seen threatening a statue bearing a Spectrum, ravaged to form the characters 3D. The foreground and background were also painted artwork, but when the three layers were set up one behind the other rather like a cardboard stage set, the soft focus created a three-dimensional effect.*

CRASH was rapidly expanding, both in scope and in the people who worked for it, at least on a casual basis. As Kean, Frey and Western fiddled around in the 'studio' (in reality Roger's bedroom) setting up the various bits and pieces for the cover shot and getting the lighting and focus just right, downstairs another mail-order-buying youngster tried his hand at writing a test review (of Rabbit's dreadful *Deathstar*, if my memory serves). He was 13-year-old Robin Candy, who, to his eternal embarrassment, appeared in a photograph sitting cross-legged on a Spectrum wearing a CRASH T-shirt as part of the Hotline spread.

Roger reckoned the test was satisfactory, and Robin joined the reviewing team along with Matthew Uffindell, Chris Passey and one or two other Ludlow locals.

Three other newcomers made their first appearance, Signpost in the Adventure Trail, Ultimate's enduring Lunar Jetman comic strip drawn by John Richardson, and at the end of the Playing Tips, my Hall Of Slime, which lasted up until recently when I thought it had finally had its day. Nearly every other magazine ran high-score tables for readers, usually called Hall Of Fame or Roll Of Honour. When asked to do the same in CRASH I thought it would be boring to repeat the formula, and since none of the scores printed elsewhere seemed to be checked out for truthfulness (and how can you all too often?), and the whole high-scoring ethos seemed reminiscent of 'creeping' at school, I opted for the Hall Of Slime – a special home for high-scoring creepie-crawlies. It worked a treat!

The centre spread saw our first ever colour map, part one of the *Atic Atac* plan, done with the help of competition entries. But the amazing feature of this issue was the mammoth article Roger prepared on 3-D games to date. 14 pages long, it examined the nature of 3-D perspective and then showed how each form had been implemented on the Spectrum through some 60 games. Once again, in many respects it was a 'first'; no other entertainment computer magazine had ever attempted such an exhaustive, or long, feature before. And it went against the traditionalist grain – publications aimed at a teenage market were supposed to present short, snappy articles in recognition of the short attention span of young people. It was an outmoded concept CRASH threw away, we all believed our readers capable of reading long, detailed and intelligent pieces (even when we were often forced to listen to some surprisingly fluent obscenities on the Hotline answering machine!).

Despite the onset of the summer months, software was holding up well. Five games were Smashed, the oddly-named *Worse Things Happen At Sea* from Silversoft, which was maddeningly addictive and funny, Bug Byte's *Antics*, the very playable high-scoring game *Moon Alert* from Ocean, an adventure Smash in Level 9's *Snowball* – first of the famous trilogy – and the dubiously-acclaimed *Sabre Wulf* from Ultimate. There's no doubt it should have been a Smash – it's just that it arrived so late in the month we hardly had time to play it enough, and copped out by not rating it at all!

Up until this moment, CRASH had been produced from a house, really from just two small rooms, but the company's finances had improved sufficiently to afford proper offices. As Issue Six came towards completion, Newsfield leased three floors of a building in Ludlow. We were all looking forward to being able to stretch out a bit, to be able to write and do the artwork in less cramped quarters.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION



**FULL THROTTLE** (MICROMEGA)  
**& RAPSCALLION** (BUG-BYTE)  
**reviewed**

## SUMMER COMPETITION SPECIAL

**8 ACE COMPETITIONS & 100s OF PRIZES!!**

**OVER £3,000 IN VALUE FROM:**

**Lothlorien \* Melbourne House  
Micromega \* Poppy Soft \* R&R  
Realtime \* Ultimate \* Crash**

**SPECTRUM**  
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
**ATIC ATAC MAP  
PART 2**



## August 1984 Issue No. 7

Released on  
July 26th

Right from the start Oliver had been illustrating CRASH with a mixture of action-packed comic-strip pictures and gentler, more humorous cartoons of variously-shaped alien beings. The latter became very popular with readers, who dubbed them 'Oli bugs'. They can still be seen at the top of the editorial page today. To mark the holiday season, Oliver gave dynamic game themes a rest – and the bugs a cover. A typical CRASH reader relaxes with friends on the sands of some far off planet, complete with all the luggage he needs – a monitor, joystick and his Spectrum.

During July, as the August issue was being written, Newsfield moved into its new premises in King Street – in spirit if not in fact. Hold ups over the lease meant that we were still crammed like sprats in a pickling jar in Roger's house where we had started out.

Space wasn't the only concern, the need for more professional equipment to produce the magazine's black-and-white pictures had led to the procurement of a large, computer-operated process camera. It was important to have it, and it had been thought that there would be space to put it. The machine arrived in July with no home, but the directors took the risk of installing it in the new offices hoping that the lease problems would be sorted out quickly. Fortunately they were, although not in time for this edition. The camera went on the third floor and weighed a ton; it would have been awful to have had to carry it all the way down again!

Out in the wide world, a terrible event had taken place: the great British software hope, Imagine, had collapsed owing fortunes, including several thousand pounds of advertising revenue to CRASH. At the time, it seemed to be the most visible tip of an iceberg of financial strains for the software industry, and directly led to the notion of the summer software slump, a concept that's stayed with us ever since.

And yet this issue provided some excellent games. The three arcade Smashes were from Micro-something-or-others. There was Micromega's marvellous bike road-racer, *Full Throttle*, Micromania's *Kosmic Kanga* and Mikro-Gen's *Automania*. Of the last, the review kicked off saying 'Meet a new hero . . . Wally Week is destined for big things . . .' It wasn't a psychic prediction but a reference to the pay rise he hoped to get from working hard in a car factory. Now, it's a matter of history that Mr Week was indeed destined to become very big. The other biggie was Beyond's *Lords Of Midnight*, which had finally arrived and sent Derek into paroxysms of delight. It set 'new high standards in Spectrum software,' he declared.

Among those that just missed being a Smash were Ocean's *Cavelon*, another Panayi 3-D game from Vortex, *TLL* and *3-D Tank Duel*, this last from a new software house called Realtime, now developers of many Spectrum games for large companies. One of the three programmers, Andrew Onions, was originally from Ludlow. His parents lived five doors away from Roger Kean (incidentally, the house is now rented by Richard Eddy and some others from Newsfield). Everyone loved *Tank Duel*, the best-ever implementation of that old arcade original, *Battlezone*. But we were also aware that the review could be called biased if the Ludlow connection became recognised, so Matthew Uffindell and Chris Passey were kept in the dark as to who Andrew Onions was!

Advertising was becoming increasingly more professional, better images, better designs and more impact. Along with the improvement, however, came an additional helping of hype – classier boasting doesn't necessarily mean a classier product. The more pre-release exposure a game received, the harder it could fall – companies too. One such game, well advertised and eagerly awaited, was also one of the earliest 'big' licences, CRL's *War Of The Worlds*. Based on HG Wells's famous novel and with a helping hand from Jeff Wayne's equally famous music, the game proved only too well that a good idea and loads of hype aren't set for success unless there's also good game design and a decent program in there somewhere. Soon enough, the established companies would be able to employ the talents of individuals and teams, but in 1984 the best of those people were struggling to make their names as independent outfits, like Realtime.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No.8 SEPTEMBER 1984

85p

AN ISSUE OF EXCLUSIVES!

**STAGECOACH & BLACKHAWK**  
CREATIVE SPARKS

**THE LEGEND OF AVALON**  
HEWSON CONSULTANTS

**DARK STAR**  
DESIGN DESIGN

**TIR NA NOG**  
GARGOYLE GAMES



**SPECTRUM**  
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
PRIZES GALORE IN OUR  
COMPETITIONS!!

**How Crystal became Design Design**

**Lothlorien - Keyboard Warlords**

**The Virgin Sorceror**



## September 1984 Issue No 8

Released on  
August 30th

Again we have a summery cover to suit the season, and one that isn't related to any game. This is a splendid example of the Spectrum device being used in a surreal manner to create effect. The distributor voiced a worry that readers wouldn't be able to tell from the painting that it was a computer magazine. But one glimpse of that P-quotes-PRINT key was like a neon sign to any rubber-keyed Spectrum owner – and they were all rubber keys then. In order not to distract from the picture, the cover lines were kept, for CRASH, to a modest minimum.

The King Street offices are situated on three floors above a Victoria Wine shop in the very centre of Ludlow. In August, when CRASH moved in, only the top two floors were used, and they looked empty enough when we were all installed! The first floor was occupied by a subtenant who astonishingly enough was also in the computer business, a programmer of educational software.

Reception, mail order, subscriptions and administration went on the second floor, run by Franco Frey and Denise Roberts. Denise had joined Newsfield only a month or two after Matthew, to take over his mail order responsibilities when he was moved across to do CRASH reviews back in December 83.

Of the four rooms on the top floor, one became an art room for layout and one a writing room with two desks and typewriters, one held the process camera, and the other was used for photographing screens and as a photographic darkroom. It was great luxury to have all that breathing room, and at last a proper set up existed for receiving visits from software houses. Our first two such were notable. Graham Stafford and Simon Brattel of Crystal Computing came to tell the world that they were henceforth to be known as Design Design, and to give the reviewers a preview of *Dark Star*, just about the fastest 3-D vector graphics game ever written. And Gargoyle Games, in the form of Greg Follis, Ted Heathcote and Roy Carter, nipped over from Dudley to show us a game in a revolutionary new style for which Gargoyle was to become celebrated. It was *Tir Na Nôg*.

We were doing well for previews, for a day later Andrew Hewson appeared bearing gifts in the form of Steve Turner's latest game, *The Legend Of Avalon*. This graphical adventure marked a distinct change of pace and 3-D style for Steve, and even in an unfinished form it looked very exciting. These early previews made CRASH's manifesto of being first with new games, new software houses and innovations a reality. The 'exclusives' war was beginning to hot up, but we felt well satisfied with August!

When not hard at work looking after the business end of CRASH or reviewing utilities, Franco Frey wore his other hat as an engineer. For some months he'd been developing a hardware programmable interface for the Spectrum, and suddenly it was ready to market. We had tried out several prototypes in the office, and they made setting up joysticks much easier. It was the Frel Comcon, which was to become a huge success. Our preview was a rather easy scoop to make!

Hot games were more in the news than the reviews, although Creative Sparks's *Black Hawk* was Smashed for its addictivity (certainly not its graphics, whatever the ratings said), and of course there was the state-of-the-art sports simulation from Psion, *Match Point*. Derek provided the third: Adventure International's *The Hulk* with its pretty graphics.

Legend provided us with hype when they announced *The Great Space Race*. The campaign relied heavily on the reputation of their *Valhalla*, although many suggested that Legend was busily recreating an aura of success around the earlier game greater than it really deserved in order to justify claims for *The Great Space Race*. 'A spectacular futuristic romp . . . ' said our News page hopefully, but there was to be a five-month wait to find out whether or not the hype would justify the hope.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No.9 OCTOBER 1984

85p

**ZIGGY RETURNS:**  
**Backpacker's**  
**Guide to the**  
**Universe**



**NEW GAMES**

**Strangeloop**  
**Kokotoni Wilf**  
**Braxx Bluff**

**From Tin Soldiers to**  
**Computer Games**

**INSIDE GAMES WORKSHOP**

**SPECTRUM**  
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
PRIZES GALORE IN OUR  
COMPETITIONS!!

OLIVER  
FREY



## October 1984 Issue No. 9

Released on  
September 27th

*Oliver's Ziggy cover was among the most popular he produced. It was really the first CRASH cover definitely promoting a specific game, Fantasy's Backpacker's Guide To The Universe. Here was an opportunity to use his imagination to bring to life objects, characters and weird aliens involved in a game that no-one had yet seen, all from written details offered in the prerelease description. The result is a powerful picture which, ironically, probably informed more readers of what hero Ziggy was like than anything Fantasy themselves put out.*

By its ninth edition, the effect CRASH was beginning to have on the software industry was, in turn, being reapplied to its staff. Roger Kean had already been horrified a couple of months earlier at Micromania's concern when they were informed by the most powerful software distributor of the time that unless a game achieved better than 65% in CRASH it wouldn't be accepted for distribution. Now, proof sheets of CRASH reviews were being requested by retail chains to see whether a game was worthy of shelf space.

It put pressure on the reviewing team – Matthew, Chris Passey and Robin Candy – because software houses wanted to present unfinished games to discover what the reviewers would like to see improved, so that the game had a chance of becoming a CRASH Smash. Some may have considered that a visit with the personal touch would influence the team by putting it on the spot when it came to making an impartial judgement. If so, as many were to be disappointed by Matthew's outspoken opinions and Robin's downright stubbornness. Now another young reviewer had appeared (and undergone the ritual photograph pushing CRASH T-shirts on the Hotline page). He was Ben Stone, from nearby Tenbury, and he was as daunting in his opinions as the others, despite his newcomer status.

The Ziggy cover did little to help. That kind of coverage was eagerly sought by companies desperate to convince shops that their game was about to sell in its tens of thousands, and since it seemed that Fantasy got a cover with apparently no trouble, Roger found himself inundated with calls suggesting ideas that would have kept CRASH in covers until the 1990s! As a consequence, for the remainder of the year Oliver avoided game-linked cover paintings.

One of the questing visitors was Angus Ryall of Games Workshop, but he stayed longer than most, becoming our strategy columnist for the new Frontline. Another was Steve Wilcox of newly-formed Elite, who brought with him the oddly-named *Kokotoni Wilf*. Over several days both Matthew and Robin debated with Elite's programmers on minor improvements before pronouncing themselves satisfied, but Steve may have been disappointed that *Kokotoni Wilf* still missed being a Smash.

In fact Smashes were a bit thin – the pre-Christmas period was looming and software houses were holding back, apart from Gremlin Graphics. They'd scored quite a coup with TV news coverage of their 'mining' game which caricatured Arthur Scargill, then very much in the news because of the national miners' strike. *Wanted: Monty Mole* was a surefire Smash, capturing all the addictivity of *Jet Set Willy* and offering loads of new puzzling problems to solve.

Within days we achieved a cheat mode for *Monty Mole* and began preparing the map for a future issue. It was a typical late-afternoon situation: Ben (school over for the day) playing the game to reach every screen one by one, Roger sitting sketchpad in hand roughing out the screens for Oliver to fill in the detail later, Matthew in another corner alternating between reviewing and making halftone pictures for David Western in the layout room, Robin sorting through mail ready for me to start the Forum. The jokes about Robin taking over my desk were no jokes!

If this paints a suspiciously cosy picture of contentment and smacks of nostalgia for its own sake, don't be fooled – it was hard work for the small team. Within a few short months a massive expansion was about to take place and the coming changes would sunder the simpler comforts we then enjoyed.

The first indication of change was the arrival of a black Apricot xi computer. For Roger Kean, at least, the days of typewriters, paper and Tipp-Ex were over.





# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

No.10 NOVEMBER 1984

85p

## THE PIRACY DOSSIER

NEW!

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MICROSPHERE  
**SKOOL DAZE**

AUTOMATA UK  
**DEUS EX MACHINA**

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MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW



## November 1984 Issue No. 10

Released on  
October 25th

*'Sometimes cover ideas arrived without trouble, but there were always issues when nothing suggested itself. Normally Oliver prefers to work one-and-a-half times up on finished size to allow for crisper detail, but when he's running late the repro house would rather have the painting same size. This cover was the first done at printed size because the decision to go with the joystick-comparison article was made at the last moment. In some ways it's my personal favourite – you could cut the atmosphere with a knife – and yet it was done in three hours flat!*

I can remember Roger and Oliver being rather proud of having raised as much as £4,000 in prizes, possibly because it indicated how far CRASH had come from that first issue when C&VG regarded us as a local fanzine with potential. Now, without a lot of effort, we had software houses eager to participate in competitions and put up real money in value. Once again, the DIY section was the biggest in the contents, ten competitions.

And talking of the contents page . . . another development was taking place, almost without anyone noticing it. The page's basic shape had remained the same for a while, using rainbow colours when we had time to put them in. Originally this complicated procedure was undertaken by our repro house in London, but after CRASH moved into its new offices, a film-processing machine was purchased to shoot finished artwork to negatives for the printer, thus cutting overhead costs considerably. Matthew and Roger, who looked after the technical end of layout as well as writing reviews and articles, began to experiment with preparing colour for the printer. For several months to come, they were to do the contents page in-house, which explains why it was more or less ambitious, depending on how much time they had.

From this small beginning Newsfield began to do more film planning, adding colour to many pages that otherwise would have been monochrome. Today the process requires an entire department of its own, managed by Matthew Uffindell.

The big feature was a comparison of joysticks, which was pretty exhaustive – and exhausting. The team were thrashing the damned things for weeks, using Ocean's *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* as the wrecking game. And that came on top of several tiring days at The PCW Show, held at Olympia. CRASH didn't have a stand because of the cost, but Roger, Oliver and Matthew waded round talking to as many exhibitors as they could. Wearing specially-made CRASH badges, they were frequently stopped by visitors who wanted to meet anyone from the magazine.

As usual the show prompted massive releases of games and there were seven Smashes. *Pyjamarama* was the second Wally Week game from Mikro-Gen, a massive leap forward with its arcade and adventure combination. *Delta Wing* (Creative Sparks) was a sort of forerunner of *Mercenary*. There was Hewson's *Legend Of Avalon*, the complex helicopter simulation from Durell called *Combat Lynx*, and two games from our own Derek Brewster, the arcade *Jasper* and the enduring adventure *Kentilla*. *Jasper* just made it by a spot, but the tragedy is that although Derek had it ready before *Jet Set Willy*, contractual complications delayed its release; had it been released then, it would have been a real eye-opener, but advances in software were being made fast and it was almost out of date.

There was one other Smash, *Booty*, our first budget hit from newly-created Firebird.

This was our first issue composed on a computer. Learning to use a word processor and then all the complications involved with getting the typesetting back for layout meant it was quite fraught at times, and for most things I still preferred my typewriter. However, the length of POKE routines was increasing, and dealing with them was never my strongest point, so I was secretly pleased to discover Robin Candy entering them happily for me on the Apricot when Roger wasn't around. It was the thin end of the wedge of course – discontented with providing review comments and sorting mail, Robin wanted to get do 'some serious' writing, and for me, the writing was on the wall as far as Playing Tips was concerned.





No.11 DECEMBER 1984

85p

# CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

## Crash Smash

**STARSTRIKE** REALTIME

**TURMOIL** BUG-BYTE

**SIR LANCELOT** MELBOURNE HOUSE

**OUT OF THE SHADOWS** MIZAR

**DARK STAR** DESIGN-DESIGN

**TIR NA NOG** GARGOYLE

**SKOOLDAZE** MICROSPHERE



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MANY COMPETITIONS!!  
BREW  
SPACE



## December 1984 Issue No. 11

Released on  
November 15th

There were moments when people glibly assumed Oliver Frey loathed Spectrums owing to the number he destroyed in CRASH cover illustrations, but the opposite was the truth. As he remarked when ZZAP! came along, the old Spectrum was one of the friendliest objects which simply lent itself to painting, unlike the brown Commodore 64 which merely resembled a piece of fudge. Here's another cover unrelated to any game, excepting perhaps Mizar's *Out Of The Shadows*, and one that was actually a reworking of an old mail order catalogue cover, featuring a hero bursting forth from a TV screen.

The promise Realtime had shown in *3-D Tank Duel* was well and truly realised in their second release, *Starstrike*, which recreated all the thrills of the popular coin-op *Star Wars*. It was in a bit of a race with Design Design's *Dark Star*, a similar game in principle. But both Smashes showed how a closely related concept can be very differently implemented. In their own ways, they were state-of-the-art software.

Equally excellent and very different from either 'Star' game and from each other were the Smashes *Tir Na Nòg* and *Skool Daze*. Gargoyle Games gave us Cuchulainn, Sidhe and Greg Follis's Grego-Celtic mythology, giant animated characters, mental 3-D and a game hard to distinguish between pure adventure and arcade/explorer. Microsphere's characters were smaller, but beautifully animated against authentic school backgrounds, providing another sort of adventure game but with properly crude schoolboy humour as its theme. These two were also state-of-the-art. Bug-Byte's *Turmoil* and Melbourne's *Sir Lancelot* were not, but were still highly playable and addictive games of sufficient quality to make them stand out from the rest of the crowd.

Deep down in the Adventure Trail (or rather up in Newcastle-upon-Tyne where he lives) Derek was telling everyone who had packed away their Spectrums to get them out and fill the boxes with straw and tortoises, for 'when it comes to Spectrum software, you've never had it so good.' He was excited by Level 9's *Return To Eden*, Bug-Byte's *Twin Kingdom Valley*, Games Workshop's *Tower Of Despair* and the ebulliently, wickedly funny *Valkyrie 17* from the anarchic Ram Jam Corporation (through Palace Software).

To cap it off *Out Of The Shadows* from unknown Mizar was a Smash, and thereby hangs a tale – and a CRASH failure. If anyone at CRASH felt unhappy about the reliance distributors and retailers were putting on CRASH reviews for stocking, then they were probably equally happy at being able to employ this unasked for power on the behalf of new or very small software houses. Some were finding it harder to get a look in with the increasingly professional and hard-nosed market place. Our record in their favour had been encouraging. But with Mizar, we drew a blank. No distributor would accept the game, having failed to spot its marketability, despite its CRASH Smash status. It was galling. And it showed more clearly than ever that the world was changing with blinding speed. At the beginning of 1984, an advertisement helped sales, by the end of the year even a full-scale marketing campaign was capable of failing to attract the distributors' attention. For the small independent software house, it looked like the beginning of the end.

Up until this time much of CRASH editorial was written without travelling the country visiting software houses, most being done over the phone. More recently we had been happy to see how many people would actually trek up to Ludlow to visit us, a mark indeed of acceptance. But two pleasant occasions forced first Roger and Oliver to visit London, and then Matthew and Roger. The first was a trip to see a preview of the film *The Last Starfighter* (about which Roger wrote an article on its use of computer graphics), and the second was to see a preview of *Ghostbusters*, set to be the first real big film tie-in. But for the game from conquering American company Activision we had to wait . . .





# CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

No. 12 1984/85

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## CHRISTMAS SPECIAL



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**Boulder Dash** FROM HAWK **Pole Position** GAMESOFT

**Runes of Zandos** DORCAS

PREVIEW: **Airwolf** ELITE's follow up to THE FALL GUY and DUKES OF HAZZARD

**SPECTRUM**  
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW  
**FREE GIANT  
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1985!**



## Christmas 1984 Issue No. 12

Released on  
December 13th

Well, what do you do for a Christmassy cover illustration? It isn't a time for taut statements on the nature of violent life and sudden death. The painting was intended as a strong contrast to the first cover, which set the tone for CRASH, and Oliver opted for a gentle picture depicting Santa handing out Spectrums to the deprived natives of a distant planet. He employed a technique which he uses occasionally, that of spraying the background colours over lightly drawn figures, then picking them out gently in colours which blend with the background.

The Christmas Special was going to be a nightmare, everyone knew it. Only two-and-a-half weeks to write and produce it due to the schedule being compressed, and it was intended to have 196 pages, bigger than anything we had tackled before.

On top of that, the first floor of King Street had become vacant with the educational software company moving on, and it was felt sensible to move editorial down there, giving art more room upstairs. The evidence is there to see in the issue, because Roger put together a feature about how CRASH happens, and there's a photograph of himself sitting at an L-shaped desk with Matthew, ostensibly reviewing a game. How empty and tidy the place looks compared to now! This move further delayed the writing however.

And what were we looking at? The original plan had been to do an issue full of competitions, special features and few reviews, on the grounds that everyone would already have released everything for Christmas. It didn't work out that way of course, for so many software houses were late, and there were still over 30 games in. Among them was the double bill from Ultimate, *Underwulde* and *Knight Lore*, which continued the Sabreman saga started in *Sabre Wulf* and at the same time undid everyone's hopes that the Midland company would return to a sensible price level from the earlier game's, then outrageous, £9.95. Still, there was no doubting their quality, and they were Smashes. The better of the two, *Knight Lore*, was to initiate an entire genre, the isometric perspective 3-D exploring game.

Derek's Smash was for *The Runes Of Zendos* from Dorcas (formerly Doric). It was their second game, but despite its Smash, here again was an adventure game that failed to find the market it deserved. A different tune entirely for *Boulder Dash* and its hero Rockford, who would soon be adopted as a mascot by Newsfield's second title, ZZAP! 64. If its graphics weren't outstanding, that hardly mattered. This was a maddeningly addictive mind-game and its strength lay in the idea more than in its appearance.

After all the interest, Fantasy's *Backpackers Guide To The Universe* was a little disappointing, though a genuinely unusual game. Somehow the market generally thought so too, because after good starting sales, it slumped, eventually taking Fantasy with it.

*Ghostbusters* was still under wraps, so it fell to Elite to come up with a major TV tie-in, *The Fall Guy*. However the game was hardly major although I recall it having some good points. Perhaps more effort went into setting up the licence deal than into the design and programming, a feeling which would persist for a long time when it came to big licences. Elite were going for TV tie-ins in a big way, and the issue also carried a preview of their next intended game, *Airwolf*, and mentioned its follow up, *Dukes Of Hazzard*. *Airwolf* was unwittingly to do CRASH a big favour, but more of that in the appropriate month.

I still retained my Playing Tips, but only by a hair's breadth as Robin Candy waded in with three pages of POKes specially compiled for Christmas. It was to be my last month on the Tips for many a moon, Robin would take over in the New Year.

As my first job for Issue One had been to write the Look Back, it seemed only fitting that it was also my last task for Issue 12 – to complete the first year of CRASH.



The CRASH History continues next month with Issues 13 to 24



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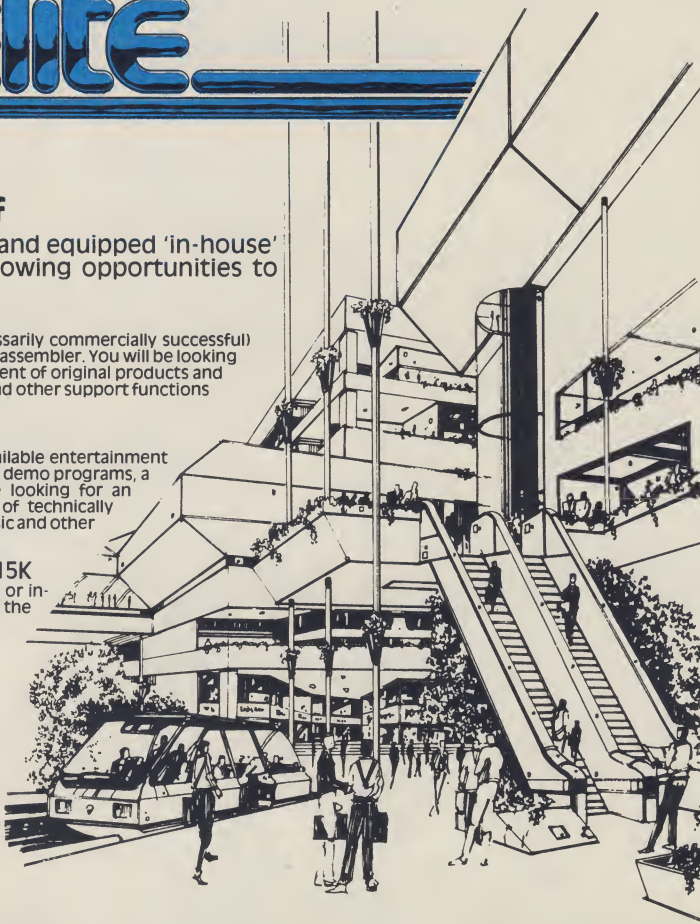
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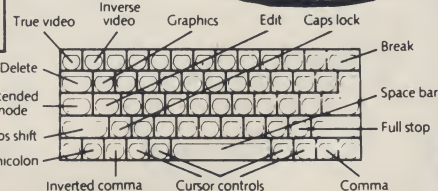
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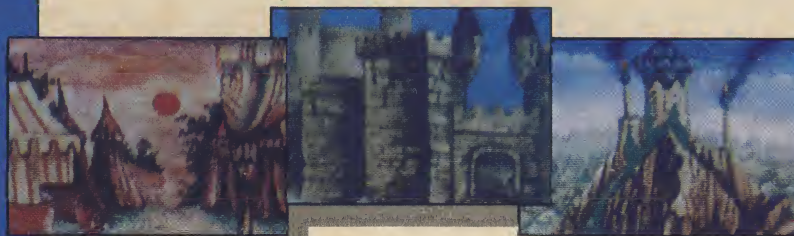
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appears in ... Knight Orc!

Screen shots taken from the Amiga version.





# PLENTY OF NETTIN'

## PAUL EVANS plugs into Micronet with a new CRASH column

**RAIN, RAIN, RAIN.** I'm sure you know the feeling: it's pouring down and there's no chance of going out. *The Adventures Of A Lesser Spotted Alfagarn Buttermoth* is on the telly.

It's at times like this you think 'at least I've got my Speccy to play megadestruction on!' – but that's not as good as someone to chat with.

It's at times like this I think 'at least I've got my modem'.

A modem is a gadget that connects your computer to the telephone line and allows it to talk to the computer at the other end. If you have a modem you can talk to any computer, however large, if you're using a standard method.

You can access large computers which hold thousands of pages of information, news, reviews, anything; I'm going to concentrate on just one of these massive networks, Prestel.

## LOGGING ON

One of the cheapest and best-supported modems is available for the Spectrum – the VTX 5000. You can pick one up for about £35-£40.

The important software is on ROM inside the VTX, and it pages in as soon as you turn the computer on. (Beware – the VTX isn't compatible with the black 128 or the +3, though there are ways around this problem, revealed this month.)

If you get the welcome screen, you're ready to log on to Prestel – that is, if you've got a password. A subscription to Prestel and Micronet, the computing area, costs around £60 a year. It's a lot, but worth it. And if you pay for one year, you get a free VTX!

## MORE PAGES THAN CRASH!

Through Prestel you can book tickets instantly, see the latest prices within seconds of change, check timetables and so on. And it covers every subject you can think of.

Prestel (or Pretzel, as some 'netters call it) is a database containing about half a million pages of information. A Prestel page is the same as a page on Ceefax or Oracle and that's what's displayed on your screen. However, Prestel is a lot faster than the other networks.

The network is made up of IPs (Information Providers) who create their own pages and allow the public to look at them. IPs on Prestel range from British Airways to the stock market.

Micronet is one of the IPs on Prestel. It serves the microcomputing public – you and me – with 'microbases' for most home computers, a large range of telesoftware from major software

houses, games with cash prizes, PBMs, a gallery for people wanting their own pages on Micronet, several helplines, news, reviews, tips, chatlines where you can have actual conversations with real people across the country, the adventures *Shades* and *MUD*, and lots more.

The Spectrum is one of the best-supported computers on Micronet. There are four main sections for the Speccy, and many small ones run on the gallery.

## SPECTRUM SPECIALS

The Spectrum Micronet base,

called Spectrum, has a massive database containing tips, news, telesoftware, a helpline, reviews of hardware, books and software, features and three weekly letters updates. The letters are the most popular thing on Micronet – anything can be answered within a week!

The Micronet Contributors run clubs on Micronet, and two Spectrum areas are run in their database. The first is Spec-tacular (not to be confused with the fanzine). It's similar to Spectrum, but has different sections like an 'artshow' and routes to gallery areas.

The Spectrum User To User Group (SUTUG) is a list of

Spectrum users on Micronet and their mailbox numbers, so you can send messages to them. It only covers people who've asked to be listed, but it's BIG!

And Specs, which opened earlier this year, is colourful and well-designed, with many areas other sections have missed out such as ads and fanzine reviews.

In CRASH I'll be taking a closer look at the Spectrum areas as well as *Shades*, the PBM game *Starnet* and many other aspects of Prestel and Micronet. My mailbox number is 219995412, and I'll send replies to your messages every weekend.

► **Micronet: an alternative to megadestruction...**

MICRONET (c)	8003001a	Op
<b>spectrum</b> MICROBASE WHAT'S NEW		
1 Microfair Ticket Winners -	7th Aug	
2 It's quicker by Tube - - -	8th Aug	
3 CET Uploader: tape version	9th Aug	
4 Sunday postbag - - - - -	9th Aug	
5 Panasonic KP1081 printer	10th Aug	
6 Troubleshooter - - - - -	11th Aug	
7 AMX Art bug fix - - - - -	12th Aug	
*ZX# brings you here. MAIN-INDEX...# 8: Micro Chat 9: Soft-Tech		

## FAX FOR THE MEMORY

**VIEWFAX**, one of the Prestel IPs, recently closed down. But some of its pages can still be accessed, because they haven't been erased – have a look at page \*258258# (For those who don't have a modem, I'll reveal its contents next time!)

## TELEGAMES

**MANY** major software companies are selling their games as telesoftware on Micronet; Elite has just joined Hewson and Firebird on the network.

Most telesoftware costs less than you'd pay in the shops, and you don't have to trudge out to buy it. Hewson is already selling *Zynaps* at a low price, and Elite offers *Paperboy* and *Space Harrier* for just under £7 each.

## FIREFLY BURNS OUT

**FIREFLY** has been withdrawn. It was a way of creating a mini-Prestel (known as a bulletin board or BB) on your Spectrum with a Beta disk system and a Voyager 7 modem.

*Firefly* was a good piece of software, but it was ridden with bugs and wasn't being updated. This looks like the end of standard BBs on the Spectrum – only *Micron* is left, and you need special software to access a *Micron* BB.

## FALLING OFF A LOG-ON SCREEN

**THE** recently-updated Prestel log-on/log-off screen is SO DULL!

And the new computer tones are causing trouble. You can now log onto this with a modem running at a different speed from the VTX. That's OK, but now my modem crashes every time I log off.

If anyone has had similar trouble, please contact my mailbox...

## 128 SOLUTIONS

**THERE ARE TRICKS** to make the original black 128 work with the VTX modem.

Just fit a +2 ROM in place of the 128 ROM (the +2 works fine with the VTX). CPC supplies these ROMs for around £8; ring (0772) 555034.

Or you can buy the £22 Spectre Comms ROM, which goes in place of the original VTX ROM; it contains new comms software which knocks the VTX software for six. But be warned: fitting this ROM will invalidate British Telecom's VTX approval.





## THE LABOURS OF HERCULES

PRODUCER: Terry Taylor  
PRICE: £1.99

**T**his *Quilled* adventure offers much more than a cursory glance might suggest. The theme chosen is one I much enjoy – ancient Greece – which I think suits the medium of adventure very well (though some unfortunates may well recall curiously inappropriate Latin lessons which have irrevocably tarnished these wondrous Greek stories).

Another plus for reviewers like myself is the superb information pack received with the game – a lesson for all budding software producers, who sometimes overlook the importance of clear instructions and information in developing product identity.

Your Herculean task in this one is to guide Hercules through a series of tasks (12 in all) asked of him by Eurystheus to assuage the strong man's guilt over cutting up his own family. Hercules's

behaviour which is, of course, completely out of character, is explained away by his good friend, Theseus, who reminds him of Hera's curse upon him. By going to the oracle our hero finds his way of gaining grace: he takes on the 12 tasks which by and large must be completed in the order set by Eurystheus.

Your journey will throw you into the fascinating world of Greek mythology. You will encounter the fearsome Hydra, the Minotaur, Cerberus the terrible guardian of the underworld, and other characters from the realms of legend. Explore ancient Greece, cross wide plains, negotiate dangerous mountains and treacherous swamps, and sail the vast ocean to distant lands and islands... sounds like a holiday brochure from the days before Club 18-30.

Though it's a *Quilled* text-only affair, *The Labours Of Hercules* is a very engaging piece of software, and it has chosen some

superb legends from which to create its problems. The location descriptions are often quite evocative, as in the case of the Royal Throne Room: 'This room surpasses anything that Hercules has ever seen. The walls are adorned with magnificent frescoes depicting all manner of exotic flowers, birds and animals. The floor is a huge mosaic, and tells of the battle of the Titans. At the head of the room is a huge marble throne, and seated on that throne is the regal figure of Eurystheus.' It is from this location that the tasks are meted out.

The EXAMINE reports are contrastingly short, but the important thing is that just about everything can be examined, whether central to the plot or not.

A good theme with good problems – what more does an adventure need? *The Labours Of Hercules* is available by mail order only from Terry Taylor at 20 Lee Road, Bacup, Lancashire OL13 0EA.

**DIFFICULTY:** made easier by referring to the Greek myths  
**GRAPHICS:** none  
**PRESENTATION:** redesigned character set  
**INPUT FACILITY:** verb/noun  
**RESPONSE:** fast *Quill*  
**GENERAL RATING:** interesting theme and plot

Atmosphere	74%
Vocabulary	73%
Logic	71%
Addictive quality	75%
Overall	73%

## THE GUEST

PRODUCER: Stephen Wadsworth

**T**he John Peel slot here – no-one has quite picked up on this game as yet, so presumably many software houses who've received it might well look here to see what I thought of it. *The Guest* is a very competent game and this is in no small way due to its very safe background – ie *The Quill*, *Illustrator* and *Patch*: most of the game was in fact written before their successor, *PAW*, became available. However, there is a niggles even if its source is fully explained by the author himself: due to the use of airbrush and inverse airbrush effects, which give the pictures above the text more texture, the graphics appear slowly and this proves irritating when trying to move the pace on a little over familiar ground. Apart from this qualification, much is as you'd expect – the coherent plot and

setting taking their inspiration from the ghoul-ridden and vampire-infested works of Bram Stoker and Stephen King.

The adventure seems very long and is set over two parts, the second being the more difficult. At the start of Part Two you type in a set of codes which must correspond to some useful items from Part One. Because I fluffed one of the entries, I had to make do without my fragment, an important item from the first episode.

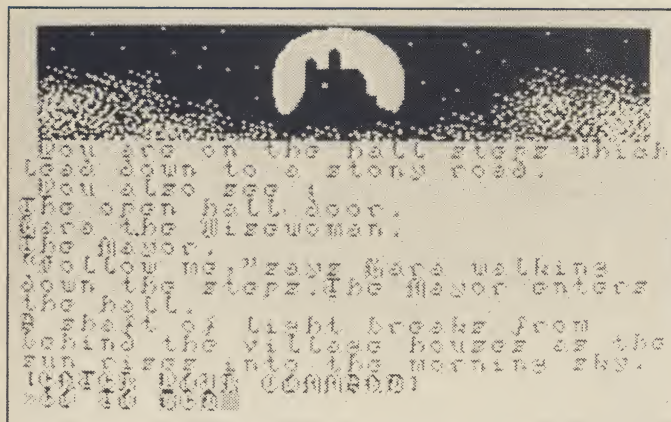
The notes accompanying my review game were truly marvellous and included maps and some rather interesting plans of Riverpoint Castle overlooking the Fief Of Riverpoint.

These lands are owned by the Bistrize family, headed by a Count and Countess. The Count has fallen ill with an inexplicable malady and the Countess turns to you, *The Guest*, her personal champion and servant fighter, to sort things out.

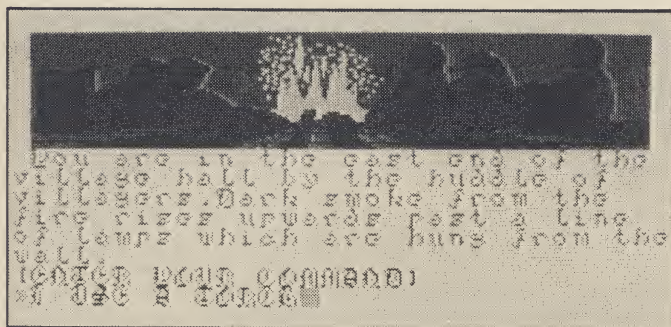
► The mythology of ancient Greece and the technology of today make for an evocative challenge in *The Labours Of Hercules*. (It's text-only; this is the load-in screen.)







► It's a case of *Quilled* until undead as you search for the Nosferatu, hidden in the shadowy world of *The Guest*



Things are pretty bad when you arrive. The villagers have shut themselves in the village hall to avoid their brethren who have joined the undead roaming the area: at the start of the adventure, their strength is almost exhausted and their morale low as no-one has seen the Priest Canen for three days. No doubt you, the hero, can turn things around with a nice pot of strong tea.

The other character in this adventure is Hara, the Wise Woman or Grey Sorceress – 'grey' because her magic is not fully white and not potent enough to vanquish the Nosferatu, the magical demon behind all the queer goings-on.

Hara is a useful first stop on your investigative trail: it is she who puts forward the theory that the Nosferatu is behind the count's sudden fall from good health and his journey into the twilight world of the undead.

To complete the adventure your thankless task is to rid the village of all these ghostly undead beings floating around, penetrate the castle's defences, destroy the Nosferatu, and round off the lot with a mystery bonus mission.

Playing the game you immediately become aware of the slow graphics, but the redesigned character set is atmospheric, if a little difficult to read. Particularly difficult are the runes that represent your input: these are so hard to decipher that you are never quite sure if you have made a typing error.

The location descriptions

aren't the most interesting I've ever read and where they do tend to wax lyrical you'll normally find them repeated often, along with the lines 'you can hear the birds singing' or 'the east sky is lit with the orange dawn light of the sun'. You're often told about the position and quality of the light, which I suppose adds some flavour to the game.

*The Guest* is rather a good *Quilled* game. It has very little in the way of earthshatteringly original features but, as with all games written on utilities, it shows a certain competence. The slow pictures are the exception: only one seems to have warranted all the effort expended in the airbrush technique which is responsible for the delays. In conclusion: a good theme and good playability, but the programming is perhaps just a little boring.

**DIFFICULTY:** Part One reasonably easy, Part Two much tougher  
**GRAPHICS:** stipple effect, average  
**PRESENTATION:** decidedly average  
**INPUT FACILITY:** verb/noun  
**RESPONSE:** *Quill*, but graphics slow  
**GENERAL RATING:** competent, but perhaps a trifle dull

Atmosphere	65%
Vocabulary	67%
Logic	69%
Addictive qualities	68%
Overall	67%

## DARGONSCRYPT

**PRODUCER:** Venom Games

**PRICE:** £1.00

**AUTHOR:** Mark Lane



arth is in near-total darkness. The reason? Repsilak, Prince of the Shadowwarves and lord of all Shroudworld, has invaded the upper lands from his domain deep beneath the ground. His objective is to claim the upper lands as part of his kingdom, for then he would be the supreme leader of all Dargonscrypt, a large separate continent.

With the arrival of Repsilak and his power of black magic, all goodness starts to fade from the land. Now the final object in the whole of the continent is starting to succumb to the prince's black magic: the sun, the very source of light and life itself. When the sun finally does become exhausted it will go out forever; the land will be in total darkness and Repsilak will be triumphant.

However, there is an alternative: if the elixir of light and power can be concocted then the sun will absorb the magic given off by the potion and regain its strength. Repsilak will be defeated. Can you discover the secret of the elixir? If so, then you will be able to rid the land of Repsilak and peace will return once more.

So goes the blurb with this one, and I can't really make up my mind whether it's just soft in the head or rather clever. The game itself does appear just a bit soft: two-thirds of the screen area is devoted to the title and the name of the software house is permanently displayed with a simple and very small picture over on the far right. Needless to say, none of the pictures would win any awards, though at least they're drawn quickly! The text is unrefined Spectrum lower case, while the scrolling text at the bottom moves in such a manner as to leave the end of the last location description topping the new one.

But despite the presentation, the game as an adventure plays

rather well – the layout is well-balanced and easily mapped. Items are carefully scattered about, usually one to every other location or so, and after about 20 locations, associations, whether justified or not, begin to form.

The objects of the first area (bounded by a pile of rubble, a deathly door and a waterfall) include a parrot cage, a trowel, a quill, a silver stick covered in small thorns, a crucifix (doesn't every adventure have one of these?), chalk, a plant, and a water canteen. Put these last two together and you see the plant suddenly put on some growth and produce a seed. You immediately ask yourself if this could be linked to the trowel...

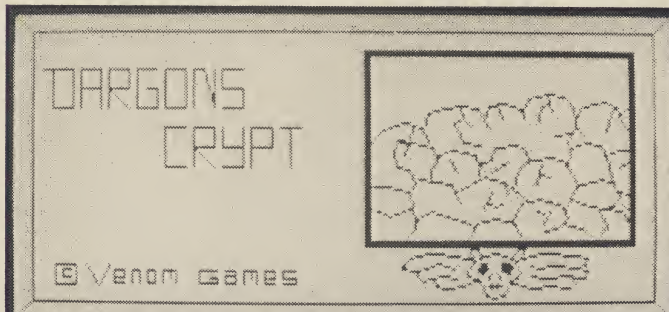
How you find the water canteen is a little strange – on your first visit to the sand caverns you suspect nothing but, when you pass by again, without any prompting whatsoever up comes 'You dig in the soft sand. You can also see a canteen of water.'

The happenings at the deathly door aren't too convincing either; the parrot squawks 'Snakivor! Snakivor' only when it's too late and you've passed the snake to your death at the door: but much more curious than this is the fact that you left the parrot behind in its cage in the small cave, way back on the OTHER side of the map. Perhaps these two disparate locations somehow connect up.

Still, *Dargonscrypt* is not bad at all for the small sum asked. It's available from Venom, 11 Hampden Close, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 7UG.

**DIFFICULTY:** easy to get your teeth into  
**GRAPHICS:** very small, and simple  
**PRESENTATION:** average  
**INPUT FACILITY:** verb/noun  
**RESPONSE:** fast  
**GENERAL RATING:** good value

Atmosphere	70%
Vocabulary	69%
Logic	69%
Addictive qualities	70%
Overall	69%



the only regular "flock" are the crows. You can also see a crucifix. What will you do? s. You are next to a large pile of rubble. The way ahead is blocked. What will you do? turn back





There was a super mailbag for this month, with some good, detailed questions I can get my teeth into. Let's kick off with a recent release, *Legend Of Apache Gold*.

#### LEGEND OF APACHE GOLD

ANDREW JONES of Leicester is left hopping mad like some Indian round a campfire by the following puzzles:

- 1 How do you get into the mine?  
I get stopped by the dancing Indian who comes out of the skull.
  - 2 How do you avoid getting your feet burnt in the desert? It says you need something on your feet. If so, what?
  - 3 What has the eagle got to do with it?
  - 4 What part do the canoe and crocodile play?
- 1 To enter the mine INSERT JEWEL  
2 GIVE FERN to Indian trader and wear the shoes he gives you to cross the burning sands  
3 To prevent the eagle eating the corn, GIVE JAR (found by EXAM DOC at wagon)  
4 To scare away the crocodile SHOW HANDBAG. Paddle the canoe with the branch.

(Apache tips courtesy of GEOFF BLAKEY)

#### NEVER ENDING STORY

'Help! I'm stuck on NES. I have been to the Southern Oracles cave and flown to Spook City on Falkor. I've seen the paintings on the wall and in my possession I have a cape, a small piece of leather, a fragment of glass and a gilt-covered horn. How do I get to new locations from inside the city? Is it something to do with

the wolf, as seen on one of the paintings?' wails ANTHONY PHILLIPS of West Glamorgan.  
TRY: GET ROPE from the area of the ruins and orchard, go in SW and NW directions and remove the planks to reveal staircase down. Tie the rope to the hook. (Thanks to G BARR.)

SCOTT BURNS wonders of the same game if the Luckdragon can fly, and how to make it fly, and what the crystal and the piece of broken glass are for. Take Falkor when in possession of Auryn and he will stay with you. Say FLY SOUTH if you wish to go south. Drop the crystal in the room with the strange machine and you will be told how to pass the sphinxes. (Thanks to regular JOHN WILSON.)

#### LORD OF THE RINGS

JACO CEBULA of Fife writes: 'I, like Ryan Smith in July's CRASH, have managed to complete Melbourne House's game by starting on the second part of the adventure. I would very much like to complete the first part but my problem lies in crossing the Brandywine by ferry. Once Sam has turned the handle and the ferry is across I find it hard to cross because I simply do not know the correct command. Also, I cannot find a way through the old forest and end up getting lost or dying of starvation. I would be incredibly grateful if you could help me solve these problems.'

'PS If you are wondering how I got to the old forest without being able to cross the river it is because I cheated and left the ring at Bag End and went over the bridge to Merry's house.'

At the landing stage the handle has to be turned five times: once by yourself and twice by each of your companions (DEREK JENKINS). Go E from the dark tunnel to a mossy place in the old forest. Go E to a wide glade and E again to a grassy place. Go SE to a bare hilltop then S to a bank on the Brandywine River. (AYMAN HAKEIN)

DAVID PRIDDLE of Cardiff has a problem in Game One. He wishes to know what he can do about the green knight and the red lady. Attack the knight till he disappears (eating food between attacks to keep your energy up).

At the tower kill the woman, ignoring her promises. (DES DAVIES)

#### THE HELM

'I've been stumped by Firebird's adventure *The Helm*. What is the purpose of the mirror, the bulb, and the spectacles?' wonders RICHARD DRAGE of Manchester. Where the keyboard lies in the centre of a room use the mirror to deflect the lightbeam. Get the octopus while carrying the bulb and use the spectacles to burn the haystack to reveal a needle.

DUNCAN LEWIS of Derbyshire would like to know how to open the castle doors, what purpose the griffin serves and where the salt is. Castle doors: if you hold the needle pick lock. Open the doors and go S. Drop the griffin and it will break the box open and reveal a diamond. Use the hollow reed to get through the spring to Dead End and the rocksalt.

#### SEABASE DELTA

DUNCAN LEWIS also has a couple of problems with another Firebird game.

- 1 How do you mend lift No 2?
  - 2 Where is the ink for the pen?
- 1 Open the panel with the key which was found in the food farm. Examine the telescope and you will see the small metal disk used to play a computer game. Drop the washing line with the loudspeaker magnet attached to retrieve the disk.  
2 Fill the fountain pen with ink from the injured octopus (MATTHEW TUCK)

#### COLOUR OF MAGIC

ALASTAIR CUSHION of Cornwall asks: 'Can you please tell me how to get off the pirate ship in Part Four of Delta 4's *Colour of Magic*? I have the bucket and the three bottles of rum, but how do I get past the pirate who guards the lifeboat?'

Get all the bottles of rum. Then, starting at the drunk sailor, leave one bottle per location leading to the edge of the ship. GET BUCKET. The sailor should fall overboard. Climb into the boat and keep bailing it out. (MATTHEW HOBBS)

#### LORDS OF TIME

'How do you clear the stream and what do you do with the lonely narcissus (Zone 1)?' asks MR MAC of Antrim. Stream: tie plank with rope, drop plank across stream. Narcissus: EXAM NARCISSUS, give looking glass to narcissus. (A SNAPE)

#### MAFIA CONTRACTS I & II

'I am stuck at 85% in Mafia Contract II. Could you please

tell me what to do once you have killed Rossi on the penthouse floor of his offices?' asks DANIEL WARD of Coventry.

S,S, press ground, S, W, either walk or wait for 'walk' at crossing, W, S, W, W, open door, W, W, N, open door, up, open door, fire. Later get card, enter code and get folder.

JAMIE CORK of Buckinghamshire poses the following queries:

- 1 Where is Vincetti's office?
  - 2 Where is the gun?
  - 3 Is there any way of avoiding 'suddenly you hear a screech of tyres and a black Cadillac pulls up - three men jump out and blow you to bits'?
- 1 Insert the coin. Take the ticket from the machine and get into the train. Get off at Chinatown and say 'go up steps'. Now you can see a very big warehouse - Vincetti's office. (RONAN O CAOLLA)
- 2 Go to the shop opposite the hotel and say 'Lou Ferrelo'. Show him the passport. Say 'yes' when asked if you expect a bulletproof vest. The gun is here as well. (ALAN WILLIAMS)
- 3 Keep moving - don't take too long to complete each section of the game!

Stuck in a dismal dungeon? Can't get past a 24-fanged monster? Missing that vital clue? Just write with your problems (and your adventure solutions!) to

Signstumps  
CRASH, PO Box 10,  
Ludlow,  
Shropshire SY8 1DB

Sorry - your Stumps can't be answered personally, but as many as possible are printed each month

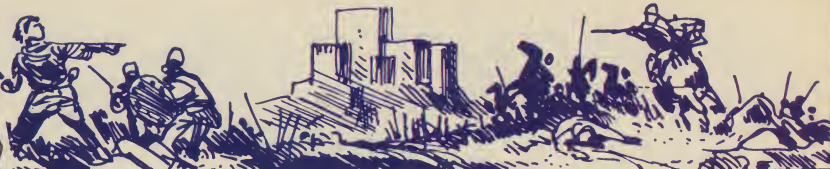
## A PLACE IN THE SHADE

Micronet users can get into *Shades* with a special offer of five free hours on the multiuser adventure - open to novices and experienced *Shadesy* characters alike. (The usual cost is 97p an hour.)

For information on Micronet, ring (01) 278 3143 or write to Durrant House, 8 Herbal Hill, London ECTR 5EJ - and read the new CRASH comms column which makes its debut this issue.



# SIGNPOST



## IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT ON THE NIGHT

Dear Derek

Thanks a million for printing my 'poetic' tips for *The Red Lion* in Issue 42. It was great to see them occupying an important-looking scroll. However (there's no pleasing some people), I think I should point out a small typographical error. The last bit should read not 'the Lord of the Right', but 'Lord of the Night'. The only reason I mention it is to avoid accusations of political bias, no matter how appropriate comparisons between the Mire Lord and certain right-wing politicians might be.

CHRISTOPHER WARD, Mystic Software

## YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS

Dear Derek

As promised many moons ago, when I still had the spectre of A level exams hanging over me and devoted 25 hours a day to revision (well, it seemed like that!), I've finally got round to writing the *Doomdark's Revenge* pokes program.

When entering the program don't be disheartened by the length of it – it's half the length without the REM statements. Leave out any lines between 601 and 681 you do not want, but you must include the end marker (line 691). Also, only the first data block is checked, so with the poke data you'll just have to double and triple check it yourselves.

Running the pokes program, it will ignore the BASIC loader of *Doomdark's Revenge*, but load the headerless code. It will then black out for a minute till the screen attributes flash on, but the border will remain masked black for a further minute. Don't worry about this, it's just me being clever.

The list below details all the pokes:

- 1 NO MIST (lines 600-601) does exactly that – no mist to restrict the view of Icemark.
- 2 MOVE THROUGH ANYTHING (lines 610-611) allows you to move at night through the icy wastes, to move out of battles at any time, not become immobile when utterly tired, and to move into any fortress or city without approach or attack.
- 3 NOT KILLED BY DRAGONS (lines 620-621) allows you to pass through dragons, wolves

and so on without the fear of being killed.

- 4 CHOOSE AT NIGHT (lines 630-631) is especially useful if moving at night through use of poke 2.
  - 5 FREE WARRIORS (lines 640-641). You or your fortress do not lose any troops when recruiting or posting. In other words, an extra hundred troops are created every time you use post or recruit.
  - 6 SEE SCREEN BUILD UP (lines 650-651). Every time you move you see the new picture being generated. It looks like the landscape is advancing towards you and is especially useful in looking 'behind' mountains and forests.
  - 7 ALWAYS RECRUIT (lines 660-661). If you use the approach key the character will always be recruited. You can even recruit Shareth The Heartstealer!
  - 8 NO MOVEMENT AT NIGHT (lines 670-671). With this the computer does not move any of the characters at night, it only decides the battles. Only to be used if you want a really easy game or for use with poke 9.
  - 9 CONTROL ANY CHARACTERS (lines 680-683). When pressing CHOOSE, all the 128 characters are listed in a total of seven pages. To help you, all those characters you have not recruited are in blue (black is dead, red is your side). This can be used in a number of ways:
    - i) By pressing 5 on the list page you can look through the eyes of Shareth The Heartstealer and see where she and her armies are, using it as a warning for your troops.
    - ii) By use of poke 8 eliminating the computer from character movement you could have a proper two-player game. The first player would take control of Luxor and the second player control Shareth, with the computer there simply to decide the outcome of the battles. You would have to use a pen and notepad to note down which characters Shareth controls and it would call for much honesty on the part of the players. However, it would produce a very interesting game, either having to fight against Shareth who is controlled by a different strategy or by playing Shareth and seeing the game through her eyes. See if you have a better strategy for Shareth than the computer does.
- I hope you find these pokes useful and I am sure you will find many different uses for them, especially with poke 9ii.

```

1 REM DOOMDARK'S REVENGE POKES
2 REM BY PAUL STEPHENSON
3 REM 19th JUNE 1987
4 REM WARNINGS :-
5 REM SCREEN BLACKS OUT
6 REM FOR 1st MINUTE
7 REM BORDER MASKED BLACK
8 REM FOR 1st 2 MINUTES
10 CLEAR 65535
20 LET P=23440 : LET T=0 : GOSUB 200
30 IFT<>10425 THEN BEEP 1,0 : PRINT "ERROR
  IN 1st DATA BLOCK" : STOP
40 LET P=60000 : GOSUB 200
50 PRINT $0 ; AT 1,2 ; "START DOOMDARK'S
  REVENGE TAPE" ; AT 15,0
60 RANDOMIZE USR 23440
200 READ $ : IF A$="" THEN RETURN
210 FOR F=1 TO LEN A$ STEP 2
220 LET A=CODE A$(F)-48-(7 AND A$(F)>"9")
230 LET A=A*16+CODE A$(F+1)-48-(7 AND
  A$(F+1)>"9")
240 POKE P,A : LET P=P+1 : LET T=T+A : NEXT F
  : GOTO 200
500 DATA "31CB5C2160EA11445CD5"
501 DATA "016400EDB0DD213AB011"
502 DATA "9001AFD6F908F3CD6C05"
503 DATA "30EF215DB006007EED67"
504 DATA "7EEE5E772310F6AF3210"
505 DATA "B121FF5A772BCB7420FA"
506 DATA "DD21004011901B3EFFCD"
507 DATA "76B0DD2600110401CDC5"
508 DATA "B03FC33270B0CD69B0C9"
509 DATA ""
600 REM NO MIST
601 DATA "3E1832666EAF32B563"
610 REM MOVE THROUGH ANYTHING
611 DATA "211819225E84"
620 REM NOT KILLED BY DRAGONS
621 DATA "3EC9324B83"
630 REM CHOOSE AT NIGHT
631 DATA "3E3E3254863EC332BF7A"
640 REM FREE WARRIORS
641 DATA "AF322987324F87"
650 REM SEE SCREEN BUILD UP
651 DATA "3E7A329965"
660 REM ALWAYS RECRUIT
661 DATA "3E3E32D57C3E1832407D"
670 REM NO MOVEMENT AT NIGHT
671 DATA "3EC932F681325367"
680 REM CONTROL ANY CHARACTERS
681 DATA "213E39228F7321328222"
682 DATA "9173215D182293733EF1"
682 DATA "329573"
689 REM END MARKER
690 DATA "C325B1" , ""
    
```

PAUL STEPHENSON, Leeds

700 REM PAUL WINS THIS MONTH'S £20 OF SOFTWARE  
710 GOTO ISSUE 46

DB

## PERFECT PUZZLES

Dear Derek

I am writing on quite a number of points so I will be as brief as possible. Firstly, on the subject of graphic/text adventures. You have said you prefer adventures with graphics – why? The only adventure I've played where the graphics added to the game was *Warlord*, and this meant the text had to suffer. In fact in many cases graphics detract from a game – *The Secret Of St Bride's*, Level 9 games, for example. I

personally prefer longer text – you've got to admit Level 9 games without graphics are far better than those with graphics.

Next, I would like to commend you for the excellent *Adventure Trail Extra*. It was certainly a job well done, and maybe the adventure section should be expanded every month...

Also, I would like to put forward a suggestion for a new subsection entitled *Favourite Puzzles* (or some more imaginative title). In this section readers could say what their





favourite puzzle in an adventure was, and detail what happens. My favourite is in *Worm Of Paradise* (Level 9) where the sign 'Dump Rubbish Here' has to be moved to clear a pile of rubbish, and put somewhere else to build a new one.

S NICHOLLS, Newcastle

*Graphic vs text adventures: I've been here before. The point is we now have graphic computers with 128K of memory, and I don't think it's too much to ask for good pictures AND meaningful text. I do take your point when it comes to the old 48K-only games, though. As for your idea about a new section for 'problems I have loved', it's an excellent idea. I'll get thinking about it immediately.*

DB

## YOU WANT PROBLEMS? I GOT PROBLEMS

Dear Derek

I am writing this letter to talk about the thing that makes or breaks an adventure, the problems to be specific. Yes, the things that drive you up the wall for days till you finally write a desperate plea to Signstumps then realise the answer two minutes after you have posted it. We have read about the seven sins of adventuring but I think an adventure is affected mainly by the problems in it.

- 1 The Classical Problem  
Never having played the original *Adventure*, I recently bought *The Serf's Tale* and found myself able to pass through it relatively quickly because nearly all of the problems fall under this category, simply because they have been repeated in other adventure games (or stories). For example, water the plant then climb up it. Swing over river with rope (*Kentilla*).
- 2 The Obscure Solution Problem  
What about this for a real palaver? In *Return To Eden*, throw the sweet pea to the Ouija bird, it lays a brick. Plant the brick whereupon it turns into a house plant! Well it's all very well for the author but what about the player? Has anybody who has played the game (Level 9's worst) passed this problem without a solution sheet? These are the worst type of problem, the type that can put you off playing the game at all.
- 3 The Obscure Vocabulary Problem  
Thankfully not too common anymore and extinct in the upper-class adventures. You

soon reach the stage of typing in the obvious solution in every conceivable manner possible (a thesaurus will help) but nothing happens till you type it in Chinese!

- 4 The Logical Problem  
The following problem in *The Pawn* was made hard to solve because of my instinctive reaction to place it under category 2 or 3 (obscure solution or vocabulary). After finding neither the hoe nor the rake were strong enough by themselves to lever the boulder off the path, I removed my shirt, tied them together and tried again – SUCCESS! This problem would be classified as category 3 in a lesser adventure but with the excellent language parser in *The Pawn* this can be made common place.

So now, all you budding adventure writers, it is the problems that control the playability of the adventure so take them from categories 1 and 4 only (classical or logical). With the whole of the 128K available and using PAW truly brilliant adventures can be written even to the standard of *The Pawn*. *The Pawn* has achieved cult status simply because of all the things that can be done that aren't connected to the final solution, that is, all objects can be examined (including background), people can have interactions in intelligent ways (no set phrases like *Sherlock*). Objects can be tied together or filled even if they have no part to play. Too many adventures fall into the trap of only letting you act upon solutions to problems rather than giving freedom in movement. Surely the Golden Age is only just beginning in the adventuring world.

J WILLIAMS, Lincolnshire

*You lost me at one point, but otherwise an excellent letter. I particularly liked the Chinese comment and the part about getting the solution just after sending off a plea – I'm sure many readers can relate to this. Still, other readers may be stuck on the same parts of an adventure and Signstumps provides help.*

DB

## ANOTHER ONE HOOKED

Dear Derek

I used to think no discerning player could be converted from arcade games to adventures – but now I'm eating my words! Because I live within a short train

journey's distance of London, I popped along to the Microfair in search of cheap games. Indeed, I found what I was looking for, *The Sentinel*. Though I only took a tenner I still had a pocket full of change; consequently I hunted for another bargain. For some quite unknown reason I walked over to an adventure stall. Searching through I picked up *The Price Of Magik*, a Level 9 adventure. I suppose it was the artwork that first attracted me to it, but I couldn't help noticing what was at the bottom of the cover: 'A CRASH Smash... CTW Pick of the Week...' etc. 'Gripes!', I thought, 'some game!'. Readily parting with my last few pennies I left. Since the first time I loaded *The Price Of Magik* I've been hooked; I didn't realize just how much fun I had been missing. To give some indication of how good *Magik* is, I've played it more than *The Sentinel*, which is really saying something, seeing as *The Sentinel* is probably the best nonadventure game to hit the good old Speccy.

This letter is aimed mainly at so-called arcade freaks. If you have never tried adventuring, for Grudd's sake buy one (recommended by CRASH of course) and try. It's very annoying having wasted years of computing not knowing what you are missing.

JAMES HOME, Kent

*I can't really print your address for swapping games – as you requested – in an organ as dignified as CRASH, James, but do put your swaps in local shops and fanzines, which I'm sure will elicit a good response. And keep on adventuring – it's nice to see a reply to those arcade chauvinists who think all adventures are dry, intellectual bores!*

DB

## MAKING A HASHI OF KOPYASHI

Dear Derek,

Please print the solution to the Wisdom and Understanding doors in *Kobyashi Naru* which Ewan McEachran of Staffordshire submitted in Issue 41. I have been getting nowhere for two months. If you can't print the solutions in Signstumps, could you send a letter with them?

DAVID CAYZER, Tyne & Wear

*Well, David, I can't send you the solutions – Adventure Trail is a magazine column only, and I haven't the time to correspond with readers on a personal level (so DON'T send self-addressed stamped envelopes – I will*

*endeavour to answer as many queries as possible in Signstumps).*

But good news now – below are solutions to the two unsolved parts of *Kobyashi Naru*. (Ewan McEachran sent in solutions to all three parts of *Kobyashi Naru* for the *Adventure Trail Extra*, but I decided to print only the Knowledge solution then, just to tantalise you!)

## WISDOM

There are two ways to do this, but mine is more fun.

- 1 Activate the solance. Pull it. This will free it of the meat block. IMPORTANT – activate it again (this will deactivate it).
- 2 Go north. Analyse tunnel – to find a cliff. Analyse cliff to find an omask – like a gas mask. Get it. Use omask.
- 3 Go east till you find a giant snail called a Silicoid. Activate solance. Cut antennae. Activate the solance again (to deactivate it).
- 4 Go east quickly till you can go no further. Swim centre to find a giant clam. Use solance, which will block its jaws. Swim clam. Get pearl. Be careful not to get the solance here – if you do, death will follow.
- 5 Swim water. Ascend (anything). You will now be on top of a cliff. Descend cliff.
- 6 Go south then east to finish.

## UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Analyse megavnit. Activate megavnit. Get lasalite.
- 2 South, east, jump pit, east.
- 3 Driods will appear, and if you analyse the yellow area you will see a strange wheel. This is the object. Do not go east. Activate lasalite so it gives off a strong magnetic field. Drop it – this will attract the wheel, but also the driods.
- 4 Go west. Throw the wheel into the pit. One of the driods will pick it up, and you then jump. Hover droid.
- 5 He will remove you to his perch. Analyse perch to find a secret passage. Do not go down. Go west. Analyse passage to find the lasadroid near. Activate the lasalite. Use it. Go east.
- 6 Analyse computer – you will find some buttons. Activate computer. Then go south. Get wheel (again). Retrace your steps to the start. West, west, jump pit, west, north. Then go north to finish.

The ending is very tame.

DB

Send your queries to  
**SIGNSTUMPS,  
CRASH, PO BOX 10,  
LUDLOW,  
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# ALL THE DUST, HIGH-SPEED THRILLS COUL

Mirrorsoft's latest foray into the world of software features the adventure and excitement of high-speed bikers riding for the ultimate prize of the Mean Streak bike.

To celebrate the release of the game, Mirrorsoft is also offering pretty much the ultimate prize – five winners from both CRASH and ZZAP! (plus a selected group of delinquents from Newsfield and Mirrorsoft) will be taken on an action-packed Super Action day on Saturday 14 November, while 50 runners-up will each get a specially-made Mean Streak key fob.

What's Super Action? Well, it's a madcap company consisting of people who don't live in broom cupboards and have never been known to let a even a sticky-bun crumb knowingly pass their lips; instead, in search of the different, they specialise in action sports and events for jaded people in search of excitement.

If you don't fancy riding a Quad Bike, or a Trimoto, or a Meteorite buggy or taking part in a spot of archery... then don't bother entering the competition. If, however, you're the type who laughs death in the face and eats three Shredded Wheat for breakfast, then read on... On second thoughts, go and take a look at this month's CRASH demo tape and have a look at the Mirrorsoft game, *Mean Streak*.

Okay. Done that? Good, now check it out again and take notes this time, 'cos the answers to the following questions are in the tape – somewhere – or around it!

- 1 What is the name of the Mean Streak track and what is it better known as today?
- 2 How many levels are there in Mirrorsoft's *Mean Streak* game?
- 3 Who are a) the designer and b) the programmer of *Mean Streak*?

Got that? Right, put your answers on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope and rush them, posthaste, to the **MEAN STREAK THRILLS COMPETITION, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**

Entries should be in by Friday 23 October, and you must include your name, address and a telephone number where we can contact you in order to arrange the day out if you win. Right, get cracking. I'm just off to have a go at some underwater shark-wrestling to soothe my nerves – it's on a video.



# THANKS TO MIRRORSOFT



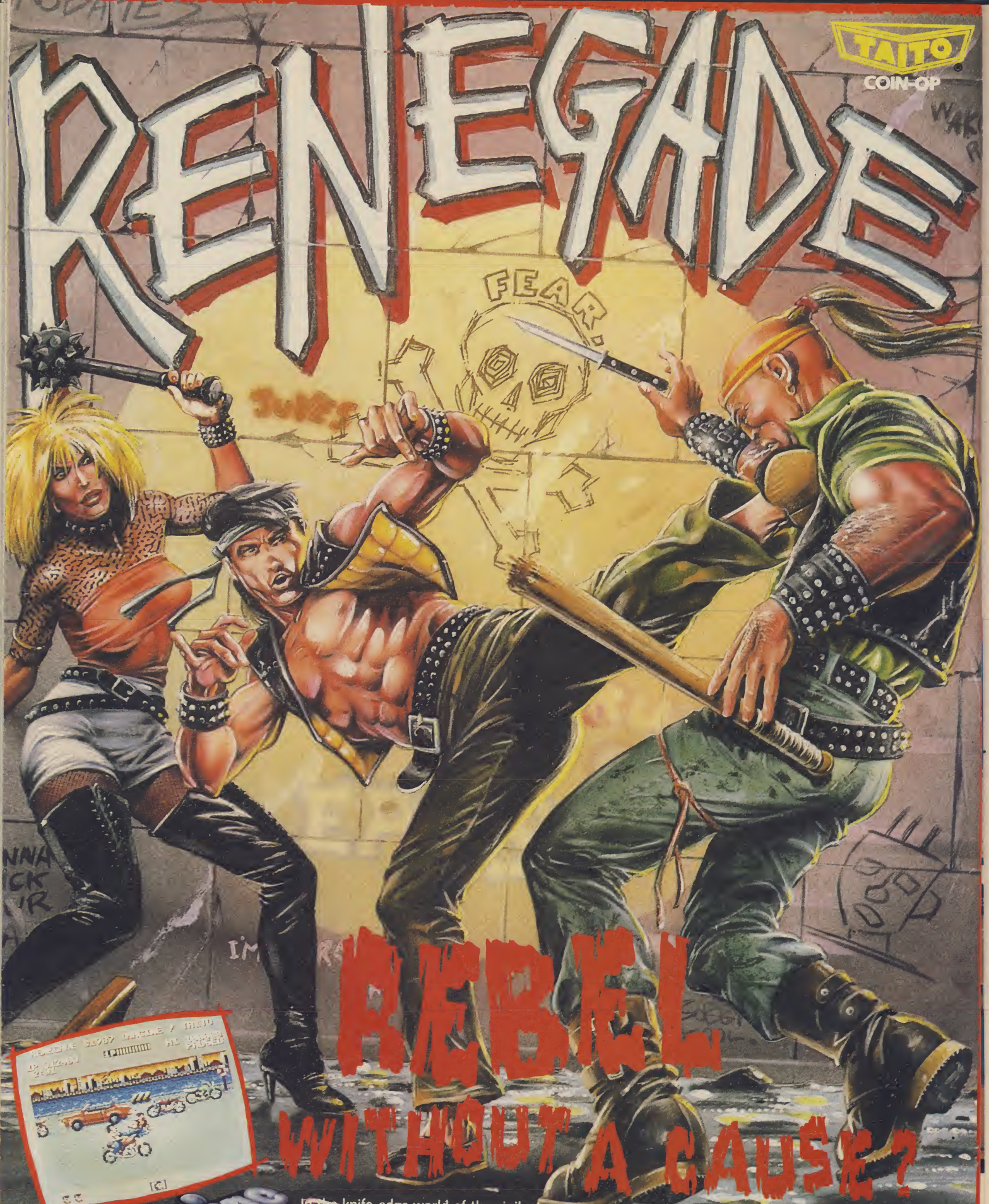
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